

ABSTRACT

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THE IMPACT OF SEXISM ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN MINISTERS
IN SELECTED BRANCHES OF METHODISM AS PERCEIVED BY
CLERGYWOMEN: 1980-2000

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This study analyzed sexism as it was perceived by clergywomen within the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church. Specifically, this research analyzed the impact of sexism on thirty African-American women ministers in Methodism between 1980-2000.

This study was conducted using a case study analysis, which allowed the researcher to detect seven factors which impact the lives of women ministers in terms of:

(1) Women and/or men's opposition to female leadership in the Church, (2) Socio-political-theological systems, (3) Perception of inferiority, (4) Interpretation of scripture, (5) Slow ordination process or denial, (6) The appointment process and/or appointment to smaller churches, and (7) Lower clergy salaries. The conclusion drawn from these findings suggests that the social implications influencing sexism in the Church is primarily laced in traditionalism.

The significance of this study advances the knowledge of sexism in the Church, and how sexism impacts the lives of women in the workplace in general, and African-American women ministers in particular. This study also advances the knowledge pertaining to clergywomen's perception of religious sexism and leadership in the Church. Therefore, it is a contribution to religious studies, African-American studies, humanities, church leaders as well as womanist studies. In addition, this study enriches one's understanding of gender relations in terms of how the roles assigned to men and women structure society and shape their personal interactions within the Church, and within the African-American community. However, this investigation is an opportunity for African-American women ministers to voice their perceptions of their roles within the Church. These interviews provided useful indications of African-American women's perceptions, progressions, and/or stagnations within Methodism.

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CLERGYWOMEN: 1980-2000

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BY
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AME	African Methodist Episcopal Church
AMEZ	African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
BMCR	Black Methodists For Church Renewal
CME	Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
ITC	Interdenominational Theological Center
UMC	United Methodist Church

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic Ministry: A position that is held by someone who may or may not be licensed, but nonetheless teaches the gospel inside or outside an academic institution.

Associate Member: Local pastors who have made progress toward licensing; therefore, associate ministers may continue their preparation and be received as an associate member.

Authority: Power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior.

Bishop: One having ecclesiastical supervision; as a clergyman or clergywoman ranking above a pastor, elder, or deacon and one who has authority to ordain and confirm, and one who typically governs the diocese.

Books of Discipline: A handbook for the church which defines the nature of the church covenant.

Chaplain: A clergyman or clergywoman who is officially attached to a branch of the military, to an institution, or to family or court.

Clergy: Individuals who serve as commissioned ministers, deacons, elders, local pastors under appointment of a Bishop (full and part-time), who hold membership in an annual conference, and who are commissioned, ordained, or licensed.

Commissioning: A church act that publicly acknowledges God's will and the response, talents, gifts, and training of the candidate.

District Superintendent: A United Methodist Church elder who presides over a district (subdivision of an Annual Conference) and in this capacity assists the Bishop in ordering the life of the church.

Elder: One who is primarily responsible for the preaching or teaching ministry. In addition, he or she is responsible for the administration of the sacraments, ordering the Church for its mission and service, and administration of the discipline of the Church.

Full-time Local Pastor: One who devotes his/her entire time to the charge to which he/she is appointed and its outreach in ministry and mission to the community. He/She must complete required course of study programs and have the license renewed yearly.

Licensing: It does not authorize anyone for the practice of ministry; rather, it celebrates the calling of the candidates and marks the entrance into probation.

Methodism: The family of Protestant Christian denominations arising from the religious heritage of John and Charles Wesley.

Minister: One who teaches or preaches the word of God with or without a license and/or full ordination rights.

Ordination: Sets persons apart for lifelong orders for serving the church.

Parish Ministry: A position that is held by someone who is licensed or ordained and who primarily teaches and/or preaches the gospel outside an academic institution.

Part-time Local Pastor: Laypersons who have met the provisions of the Discipline and do not devote their entire time to the charge. They must complete at least two courses per year in the course of study.

Position: Social or political rank and/or status of an individual

Power: Possession of control and/or influence over others.

Presiding Elder / District Superintendent: One who is responsible for ensuring that each local church under his or her supervision understands and complies with the policies and programs of the African Methodist Episcopal, Christian Methodist Episcopal, and the United Methodist Church denominations. He or she presides over the Quarterly Conference and is also appointed by the Bishop.

Scholar: One who has done an advanced study in a special field. An academic minister who teaches on the collegiate level as well as teaches or preaches the gospel outside the classroom.

Service: A function by which both deacons and elders are ordained.

Sexism: The differential valuing of one sex, in this case, men are given preferential treatment over women.

Socio-political-theological: Is related to or involves political and social factors which impact religious beliefs, religious teachings, and religious institutions. A socio-political-theological system stresses male superiority by controlling the elevation of women in the Church.

Student Local Pastor: Laypersons who have met the provisions of the Discipline and do not devote their entire time to the charge. They must complete at least two courses per year in the course of the study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research analyzed the impact of sexism on African-American women ministers in selected Methodist denominations. This research utilized a case study methodology to examine the impact of sexism on thirty African-American women ministers in Methodism between: 1980-2000. Thus, for this research sexism is the differential valuing of one sex; in this case, men are given preferential treatment over women.¹ In light of this definition, this investigation strived to determine why sexism exists in the Methodist churches. Seemingly, gender oppression is an unjust situation in which, systematically and over a long period of time, one group (in this case one sex) has more access to the resources of society (i.e., race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, age, and ethnicity contribute to many forms of oppression).

The urgent task of women's history, as well as gender studies and feminist scholarship was to make the history of women more visible. Based on current research, it appears as though the focus of women's history is leaning more towards the solidification of gender-equality and the elimination of sexism, except in some Methodist denominations. However, this research is based upon several factors which may impact the lived experiences of women ministers. The factors include: (1) Over the past twenty years, African-American women ministers in the Methodist denomination have

¹ Renzetti M. Claire and Daniel J. Curran, *Women, Men, and Society*, 4th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 10.

increased, but not without men's and women's opposition to female leadership in the church, (2) The struggle of women ministers in the church today is not only one of the political processes of ordination, but the struggle involves socio-political-theological issues of sexism, such as whether or not women are capable of fulfilling the roles men have dominated since the birth of American Methodism, (3) Perception of inferiority, (4) The interpretation of scripture, (5) Slow ordination process or denial, (6) The appointment process and/or clergywomen's appointment to smaller churches, and (7) Lower clergy salaries. There are many challenges related to the perception of women in leadership roles within the Methodist Church. Indeed, biblical scriptures are one tool used to perpetuate sexist attitudes. In First Corinthians 14:34-35 it is written:

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Scripture says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for women to speak in the church.²

This scripture is used to validate sexist attitudes and behaviors that contribute to gender oppression in the sacred arena. As a result of sexist attitudes and behaviors, women are denied access to positions of leadership and are restricted to limited defined roles; such as church mother and Sunday school teacher. However, those sanctions would not necessarily have been intended to refer to the status of women in the church today.³ Luke 24:8-22 and Mark 16:9-11 illustrate how Christ commissioned a woman to preach the risen Savior. Nevertheless, those males and females under the sound of her

² *The New International/King James Version Parallel Bible* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1985), 1429.

³ Ella Pearson Mitchell, *Women: To Preach or Not To Preach* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1991), 11-16.

voice rejected the good news. Her message was to tell the disciples (all men) and the saints what a mighty thing God had done (raised Christ from the dead) and how God is keeping his promises.⁴ It is profoundly stated by Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.:

God still surprises the church as it approached the 21st century. God still surprises the church by what God shows women. Jesus reveals himself as the Risen Lord . . . to women. Jesus calls them by name. Jesus tells them to go present themselves to the men as persons who have been sent by the Living Lord. He gives them direct orders to go tell the church what God is doing, what the Lord wants them to do, what the Lord wants the church to do, what the Lord has said to them, how the Lord has commissioned them, how the Lord has sent them; and when they obey the Lord, the church does not believe them! Some of the women of our Group . . . surprise us! One of the reasons the church did not, and does not, want to hear the message that the Lord of the church gives them is because of the messenger.⁵

Consequently, these types of attitudes (the restriction or silencing of women messengers) and conditions of sexism, foster stereotypical behaviors. Two primary stereotypical behaviors that are fostered by male ministers are: (1) Denying women ministers equal access to decision-making positions such as Bishop, Pastor, Elder, Presiding Elder (African Methodist Episcopal/Christian Methodist Episcopal), District Superintendent (United Methodist Church), scholar, and Chaplain, and (2) Denying women ministers equal pay.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it advances the knowledge of sexism in the church and how it impacts the lives of women in the workplace in general, and African-American women ministers in particular. This study also advances the knowledge

⁴Ella Pearson Mitchell, *Women: To Preach or Not To Preach* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1991), 15-18.

⁵ Ibid., 65-66.

pertaining to clergywomen's perception of religious sexism and leadership in the church. Therefore, this research is a contribution to religious studies, African-American studies, humanities, church leaders as well as womanist studies. In addition, this study enriches one's understanding of gender relations in terms of how the roles assigned to men and women structure society and shape their personal interactions within the church, and within the African-American community. Moreover, this investigation is an opportunity for selected African-American women ministers to voice their perceptions of their roles within the church. The interviews provided useful indications of African-American women's perceptions, progressions, and/or stagnations within Methodism.

Moreover, an understanding of the socio-political-theological system is significant to this study because it involves factors which impact religious beliefs, religious teachings, and religious institutions. This system is used to examine the impact of religious sexism and the changing roles of sacred institutions, particularly Methodist denominations. The socio-political-theological system usually controls the elevation of women in the church, thus controlling women's socioeconomic status and political influence. However, common to all systems of oppression is the determination to control individuals or groups, thus, the socio-political-theological system is no exception. This type of exploitation sometimes forces the oppressed to become dependent upon their oppressors for their sustenance. Socio-political-theological dependency sometimes creates a need in the oppressed to please the controllers—in this case oppression by the church.

Nevertheless, in climbing the hierarchical ladder that exists, controllers relentlessly restrict the group from achieving the highest possible status (i.e., office of the Bishop). In doing so, a greater level of power and service to the church is denied, a higher level of income is prevented, and political influence is stiffened. These elements contribute to Methodist gender oppression. Hence, the socio-political-theological system warrants discussions regarding its relationship to gender oppression.⁶

Social Implications

Social implications are a means by which this study determined the impact of sexism on clergywomen (i.e., their socioeconomic status, gender oppression, and exclusion of women from predominately male dominated positions). Today, one must build and construct humanity and society on the basis of a different type of foundation, which should include the experiences of all cultures and both genders. The United States of America and its idea of humanity has been influenced by male Christian teaching and leadership. In other words, political, social, and religious convictions have been built upon Judeo-Christian values. America's respect for humanity grew from such foundations. In the twentieth century, economic forces, the influence of communication, such as computers, and cellular phones, political upheavals, the Women's Movement, and America's ever changing moral values have encouraged people to question and challenge traditional hierarchical and outdated structures. These factors have paved the way for improvement in the workplace, the church, and society. However, the emerging changing structures of the United States, which impacted gender, ethnicity, socio-

⁶ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African-Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 6-12 & 351.

economic status, and political stance, will possibly reflect and reject some basic Christian values, such as what careers are reserved for males or females only.⁷

Additionally, the social implications of clergywomen also included women's self-images, beliefs, and values which are based on their personal life experiences. Women's determination to secure justice, financial equality, and equality between the sexes became more intense as America entered the 1980s. The traditional hierarchical structures had to be made more flexible to adapt to women's need for inclusiveness in the church, the workplace, as well as secular and sacred institutions. A view of sexism, that is, masculine domination is conveyed most appropriately by Pierre Bourdier:

And so, if after much hesitation and with much trepidation, I have ventured on to an extremely difficult terrain, currently occupied almost exclusively by women, it is because I felt that the relationship of sympathetic externality in which I found myself might enable me to produce, with the aid of the immense body of work encouraged by the feminist movement, and also of the findings of my own research on social causes and effects of symbolic domination, an analysis capable of giving a different orientation both to research on the condition of women, or to speak more relationally, on relations between the sexes, and to the action aimed at changing those relations. For it seems to me that, while the domestic unit is one of the sites where masculine domination manifests itself most indisputably and most visibly (and not only through recourse to physical violence), the principle of the perpetuation of the material and symbolic power relations exerted there is largely situated outside that unit, in agencies such as the church, the educational system or the state, and in their strictly political actions, whether overt or hidden, official or unofficial (to be persuaded of this, one only has to observe the reactions and resistance to the current proposal for a *contrat d'union civile*).⁸

Consequently, Bourdier's above statement concurs with the researcher's view that a satisfactory balance of "power" and equality has not been obtained, as evidenced by

⁷ William Dean, *The American Spiritual Culture: And the Invention of Jazz, Football, and the Movies* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2002), 34-43.

⁸ Pierre Bourdier, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 114.

women's increasing demand for equal pay and professional advancement in the church. An improved understanding of women's basic needs (in this case African-American women ministers) appears essential for the solidarity of humanity. In essence, Bourdier's above statement suggests that the illuminating and changing ideas of humanity are teaching society that a basic agreement about the values that determine culture is necessary for consensus in politics, socioeconomics, and individual religious beliefs.⁹ This is a step towards solidarity for humanity. Perhaps, the future task of determining and defining society's new values will become one of its primary focuses—not gender oppression.

It is a general consensus that African-American women experience a triad of impediments: racism, classism, and sexism. It could be stated that women from other denominations do not share the same challenges or perceptions as those from the Methodist denominations. Nevertheless, many women agree that sexism exists within the churches. However, there are varying views as to its implications and the reasons for its existence.¹⁰ Sexual politics and the exclusion of women from decision-making positions have been ignored far too long. Perhaps, some people expect men to occupy high positions of power and to receive higher salaries than women which ultimately lead to higher social status. On the contrary, women are expected to receive lower salaries

⁹ Gloria I. Joseph and Jill Lewis, *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives* (New York: South End Press, 1981), 281-284.

¹⁰ Phyllis Chesler, *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2001), 135-150.

and positions of limited or no power which often lead to second-class status.¹¹ These assertions are imperative in identifying sexist trends and gender bias within the church. Furthermore, tensions surrounding political systems in religious institutions are forcing the church to address issues of gender bias.¹² Therefore, an analysis of the impact of gender bias of African-American women ministers' personal life experiences will enhance this research.¹³ For these reasons and many more, the feminist and womanist movements evolved as a means of identifying and providing solutions to gender issues in the secular and sacred arenas for both European and African-American women.

Moreover, the "Black" Women's Liberation Movement activists of the 1960s and 1970s focused on domestic violence, rape, incest, and other social concerns.¹⁴ Also, women activists demanded a national child-care bill, a displaced homemakers bill, a lesbian rights bill, and a ratification of the equal rights bill. While many activists insisted women have equal access to male dominated professions, such as, politics, business, education, medicine, and law, others fought for separatism and the development of alternative institutions. Likewise, feminist advocates believed that their lack of economic, political, and social power was a result of a biased American legal system.¹⁵

¹¹ Gloria I. Joseph and Jill Lewis, *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives* (New York: South End Press, 1981), 4-5.

¹² Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, *If It Wasn't For The Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in the church and Community* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 93-95.

¹³ Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, *If It Wasn't For The Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in the church and Community* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 96-97.

¹⁴ Kathleen C. Berkeley, *The Women's Liberation Movement In America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 4-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

Although, the Women's Liberation Movement activists shared similar convictions, their advocacy varied (i.e., legalization of birth control, higher standards for age-of-consent laws, and the establishment of minimum wage).¹⁶ However, major differences between the two primary women's liberation movements (National Organization for Women and Women's Equity Action League) became less profound.¹⁷ Nevertheless, African-American women disassociated themselves from the women's liberation movement. European-American women's exclusion of African-American women's concerns, such as racism, as well as white women's perception of the institution of marriage and family as oppressive, led African-American women to conclude that the women's movement was primarily a battle between European-American men and women.¹⁸ So consequently, the political implications surrounding African-American clergymen and clergywomen must be discussed.

Political Implications

The formation of African-American Methodist denominations brought with them persisting masculine domination. Therefore, women have fought an uphill battle gaining ordination and decision-making positions. The effort by women to gain equality within the Methodist denominations peaked in the 1920 Methodist General Conference Episcopal Address, which considered the acceptance of women as ministers.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁷ Ibid., 53-54.

¹⁸ Kathleen C. Berkeley, *The Women's Liberation Movement In America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 51-53.

¹⁹ Grant S. Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 53.

Following this meeting, the General Conference authorized the granting of licenses to women who desired to be local preachers. The Upper Mississippi District was the first Black Annual Conference in 1920 to grant a local preacher's license under this new amendment. That same year (1920), the Greenwood District granted Mrs. Mary E. Jones a preacher's license. In 1926 Laura J. Lange was ordained as a local deacon and by 1936 she was ordained a local elder—thereby; making her the first ordained African-American woman in the Annual Black Conference. Nevertheless, further clergy advances for women would not take place until 1956.²⁰

In 1956, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States joined the mainline churches in recognizing and affirming the vocation of women clergy. Many decades later in the troubled seventies, it appears that the doors and windows of opportunity started opening for Methodist women desiring to serve as clergy. It is clear that the feminist movements contributed to institutions striving to meet the demands of women. Like the Baptists, the Methodists' order of Deacons started in 1890. It was not until the 1960s that thirty-eight of these Deacons had permission to administer the Sacraments. By 1959, the Methodists had established a committee to study the women in ministry issue. As a result, formal recommendations for the ordination of women were established by the early 1960s.

Methodist women ministers are not alone in their struggle for inclusiveness and equal access to decision-making positions. The ministerial experiences of Baptist women ministers are somewhat similar to Methodist clergywomen. The nineteenth century was

²⁰ Ibid., 50-53.

not the best of times for Baptists in America—the Civil War, challenges surrounding Reconstruction, and the growing frustration of women’s desire to vote and to play a more significant role in ministry were issues in the forefront of women’s activism. Uncertain about the growing influence of women, Baptist leaders were weary of the complications of change in the traditional role of women. Seemingly, these challenges impacted all African-Americans regardless of denominations.²¹

Traditional Baptist doctrines and masculine opposition forced Baptist women to discover different methods of ministering within Baptist denominations. Meanwhile, their greatest contributions have been in the area of missions. As the nineteenth century was coming to an end, men assumed the responsibility of hiring pastors as well as overseeing the business of the church; while women assumed the responsibility of missions, education, and support.²² In the Baptist arena, the missionary was considered the highest office held by women. In fact, teaching was and still is one of the most common ministries for Baptist women. During the early twentieth century, Baptist women began fighting more aggressively for recognition and ordination privileges while their Methodist sisters were moving forward in ministry.²³ Baptist churches, schools, and conventions allowed women to participate only in restricted and supporting roles. Nevertheless, this may not be true for all Baptist women.

²¹ Catherine Wessinger, *Religious Institutions and Women’s Leadership: New Roles Inside the Mainstream* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 158-159.

²² Ibid., 163-165.

²³ Ibid., 166-167.

Some Baptist and Protestant women who feel called to ministry usually place strong emphasis in three doctrines: (1) The priesthood of the believer, (2) The authority of the scripture, and (3) Moral autonomy or self governing independence.²⁴ The priesthood of the believer holds each believer responsible for going directly to God in prayer, for being accountable to God, and for obeying God. Therefore, many Baptist women believe they do not need permission from any other source to preach the gospel. Neither a minister nor a denomination can determine the call of a woman, for only she is accountable for fulfilling her purpose in ministry. Traditionally, Baptist male leaders evaded addressing gender oppression in the church.²⁵ This tradition has not deterred women from pursuing ministry as a career.

Likewise, Methodist and Baptist clergywomen utilize scripture to support their call to ministry. Using 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as their authority, opponents claim that women are not called to preach. Baptist autonomy can be both an asset and a liability. Local church autonomy means that some Baptist churches ordain or allow women to minister while others forbid this practice. In short, male leaders opposed to women in ministry agree that only men can lead since Jesus had only male disciples.²⁶ Based on this information alone, women could never be ministers of the gospel.

Historically, Methodist and Baptist women ministers have been subjected to similar barriers, such as slow ordination processes or denials, lower salaries, and

²⁴ Ibid., 160.

²⁵ Ibid., 160-162.

²⁶ Ibid., 152-163.

appointment to smaller churches. These factors are an indication that both Methodist and Baptist women are subjected to sexism. Nevertheless, some progress has been accomplished. For instance, the American Baptist denomination ordained Edith Hill in 1894. By 1925 about 12 American Baptist women were ordained.²⁷ It was another fifty years before the Southern Baptist denomination ordained a woman. Later in 1964, the Southern Baptist Church ordained Addie Davis, but she was unable to find a Southern Baptist Church that would allow her to be their pastor. The year 1972 gave birth to the Southern Baptist denomination's first ordained woman pastor—Durecillar Fordham. She also became the denomination's first black ordained female pastor.²⁸ Since the 1970s the Southern Baptist and National Baptist women ministers have increased considerably. As of January 1995, the National Convention USA, Inc. ordained 225 women; the American Baptist ordained 831 women; and the Southern Baptist ordained 1,130 women ministers. While some strides for women have been accomplished, statistics reveal women are usually offered associate pastor or support staff positions.²⁹

Meanwhile, the institution of sexism is often so sullen, ancient, and ingrained in the minds of women that some of them are unaware they are supporting it. Some have accepted it as the natural order of things.³⁰ Further, women are sometimes resentful of other women who step out of prescribed feminine roles, such as missionaries and Sunday

²⁷ Ibid., 166-167.

²⁸ Ibid., 172-173.

²⁹ Ibid., 174-175.

³⁰ Mary Bader Papa, *Christian Feminism: Completing the Subtotal Woman* (United States of America: Fides Claretian Books, 1981), 104.

school teachers. Envy is a destructive emotion of women, and equally destructive are the actions that follow such attitudes.³¹ These behaviors have a tendency to foster fear of another's success—self-pity, insecurities, and identification with a clearly defined subordinate social role. Therefore, a discussion surrounding theological implications is necessary.

Theological Implications

Methodist is the name given to a group of Protestant churches that arose from an eighteenth century Wesleyan movement in England led by John and Charles Wesley. This movement began as organized societies within the Church of England for religious sharing, Bible study, prayer, and preaching for the purpose of reviving the Anglican Church.³² The organization's doctrine was based on an Arminian interpretation of the Thirty Nine Articles, but emphasized personal experience of conversion, assurance, and sanctification.³³ In 1843, the Wesleyan Methodist Church was started by a group of antislavery Methodists. The next year, the General Conference split over issues related to slavery and Episcopal authority. The prohibition against the slave trade and slave ownership in The General Rules led to the division that took place in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844. It also led to the dis-membership of many black Methodists, and the formation of African-American Methodist denominations.³⁴

³¹ Ibid., 108-111.

³² William B. McClain, *Black People in the Methodist Church: Wither Thou Goest* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 1-5.

³³ Ibid., 22-32.

³⁴ Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1999), 117-118.

congregation, or church). Many, but not all ministers, need a bachelor's degree from an accredited college in addition to religious instructions from boards and seminars approved by their religious body.⁴⁵

Conceptual Framework

Since there are various factors one can use to analyze the impact of religious sexism, the researcher utilized a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework acts as a map to connect all aspects of the study (i.e., methodology, sample, procedure, instrument, and limitation of the study). This study, to a certain degree, describes and explains the dynamics surrounding the women who pursue leadership positions in the church. Therefore, this research explains how sexism impacts the lives of African-American women ministers in selected Methodist denominations. The theoretical framework that is used in this investigation is womanist theory. This theory focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, and needs of black women throughout the Diaspora. It addresses the concerns of feminist and black feminist theory; however, womanist theory is different because it addresses classism, sexism, and racism. Furthermore, womanist theory considers traditions, practices, scripture, and the everyday realities of African-American women. Therefore, two scholars' theoretical perspectives will be explored in order to explain the seven factors influencing religious sexism in the church.

The two scholars' theoretical perspectives regarding the impact of sexism on African-American women ministers that were used in this study are Jacquelyn Grant's *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist*

⁴⁵ Harry Hale, Jr., Morton King and Doris Moreland Jones, *Clergywomen: Problems and Satisfaction* (Lima: Fairway Press, 1985), 45-47.

Response and Delores Williams' *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. Grant strongly implies that feminist theory negates, underserves, or omits the complete realities of African-American women. She also contends that white women's experiences are the foundation for feminist theory, and that black women's experiences will yield a different theology that is womanist. Therefore, African-American women should execute theology out of their triple experiences of racism, sexism, and classism. Thus including reading and hearing the word of God, as well as engaging in it within the context of African-American women's experiences. In addition, womanist theory implies that one must examine the impact of sexism on African-American women ministers from an African-American and diverse cultural perspective in order to gain an understanding of their similarities, differences, and possible solutions.⁴⁶

In her book, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*, Delores Williams strongly suggests that womanist theory is a concern about the well-being of African-American communities. This concept also includes and affirms the importance of the lived experiences, faith, and religion of African-American people. Moreover, Williams' theory challenges all oppression based on sex, class, and race, and affirms African-American women's quest for a quality and productive life.⁴⁷ Certainly, Jacquelyn Grant and Delores Williams' concept of womanist theory is similar for several reasons: (1) They consider the lived experiences of African-American women, (2) They

⁴⁶ Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 33-34.

⁴⁷ Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 182-214.

raise critical issues for preaching inside and outside the church walls, (3) They demand biblical and theological transformation from those who are listening, (4) They suggest a deeper understanding and compassion for African-American woman's struggles and suffering, and (5) They strive to give African-American women a voice.

In essence, womanist theory calls into question the oppression of the African-American community. This includes African-American women's places in society, institutions, organizations, and the workplace, while considering the experiences and concerns surrounding politics, racism, sexism, classism, economics, and access to equal education. Therefore, the silencing and absence of female representation on every level within organizations, institutions, corporations, and the church indeed impacts the social, political, and theological construction of African-American women.⁴⁸

Seemingly, the following seven factors or assumptions contribute to religious sexism: (1) Socio-political-theological system, (2) Perception of inferiority, (3) Interpretation of scripture, (4) Slow ordination process or denial, (5) The appointment process or appointment to smaller parishes, (6) Lower clergy salaries, and (7) Women and/or men's opposition to female leadership. A socio-political-theological system is related to or involves political and social factors, which impact religious beliefs, religious teachings, and religious institutions. This system usually stresses its superiority by controlling women's socio-economic status and political influence. However, common to all systems of oppression is the determination to control individuals or groups. Again, this type of exploitation sometimes forces the oppressed to become dependent upon

⁴⁸ Jacquelyn Grant. *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 32-47.

others, usually their oppressors, for their sustenance. Moreover, in climbing the hierarchical ladder, controllers restrict the group or individual from achieving the highest possible status (i.e., office of a Bishop). In doing so, a person(s) is denied the greatest level of power and income. For instance, women have received equal access to full ordination rights within Methodism; at the same time, clergywomen's pursuit of senior pastor and bishop positions are being met with resistance.

Perhaps, perception of inferiority is another factor that contributes to religious sexism. Inferiority is the quality of being at a competitive disadvantage or in an unfavorable position, and being devalued. Also, persons who support socio-political-theological systems may experience feelings of inferiority toward women. Alfred Adler, an expert in the field of Individual Psychology, focused on the discovery of the individual's attitude in relation to the world. Adler aimed to understand the human being as well as his or her mental and physical unity, and social institution.⁴⁹ In studying the total person, Adler insisted that every human being should strive towards a goal. In doing so, character traits are developed—not inherited.⁵⁰ Adler insists that all people have a sense of inferiority, which influences their deeds, and that his or her feelings always drive them to improve their position in life. In contrast, feelings of inferiority may deepen and develop into an inferiority complex, which is the lack of ability to solve life's problems.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Hertha Orgler, *Alfred Adler The Man and His Work: Triumph Over The Inferiority Complex* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1963), 4-6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

In terms of how inferiority plays a role in the existence of sexism in the church, a better understanding of Adler's inferiority and superiority complex is necessary. According to Adler, most people hide their inferiority complex behind a superiority complex which clearly manifests itself in behaviors, character traits, and individual perception of his or her superhuman gifts and accomplishments. Character traits that follow are: (1) Exaggerated demands made upon self or others, and (2) Attachment of one self to prominent persons or a desire to rule over the weak or those of "inferior" rank or quality.⁵² Furthermore, individuals who tend to have superiority complex personalities are very successful in their work, but find it difficult to retain good relationships with others. Usually these people possess a strong striving for power, and want to prove his or her superiority, which is indicated in their depreciation of others. This depreciation of others often leads to an inferiority complex. In addition, many men with a superiority complex exhort their "superiority" toward women by believing in the general inferiority of women.⁵³ This viewpoint is exemplified in the concept that women are the weaker inferior sex; therefore, men are a representation of strength.

Inferiority is strengthened by claims that men make better leaders and that a woman's roles are to give birth to babies and be nurturers. However, before emancipation all laws were created by white men, thus securing, enforcing, and maintaining male privileges. On the other hand, women were denied the privilege of occupying higher level professions. Consequently, there are women who emphatically reject the notion of inferior positions—demonstrating that they are competent through

⁵² Ibid., 73-74.

⁵³ Ibid., 74-75.

their pursuit and possession of traditionally male-dominated occupations. In some instances, women's feelings of inferiority turn into an inferiority complex. Adler insists that the superstition about women's inferiority has created havoc on men and women's mental development.⁵⁴ However, Adler's cure for inferiority complex is: (1) A discovery of the source of the complex, (2) Realization that one is not bound to this complex, (3) Correcting one's view of life, and (4) Developing more courage, confidence, and social interest.⁵⁵

The interpretation of scripture is another factor contributing to religious sexism. The position of women in the church continues to be one of the most debated topics in the world today. Although, most mainstream denominations have granted women access to full ordination rights; however, when it comes to positions of authority (Bishop, Pastor, Chaplain, scholar, Elder, Presiding Elder, and District Superintendent), they are primarily dominated by clergymen.⁵⁶ The interpretation of scripture can strengthen the hierarchy of male domination and female subordination, or it can strengthen and support the call of women into ministry at all levels. There are two specific scriptures that are usually used to prohibit women from preaching:

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask

⁵⁴ Ibid., 76.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 77-78.

⁵⁶ C. S. Cowles, *A Woman's Place: Leadership in the church* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1993), 25.

their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for women to speak in the church.

(1 Corinthians 14:34-35)⁵⁷

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.

(1 Timothy 2:11-15)⁵⁸

Therefore, some biblical teachings insist that women should not be permitted to teach or preach, nor are they permitted to obtain leadership positions where women can exercise authority over men.⁵⁹

It is imperative that the church (bishops and theologians) establish an overall framework for scripture interpretation. Perhaps, the factors contributing to sexism will cease to exist. One alternative could be the implementation of exegesis. This can be accomplished by considering what words mean in Greek or Hebrew and then consider its appropriate translation.⁶⁰ Next, one should capture the immediate context of a scripture—not every word in the Bible is directly spoken by God. For instance, the Bible contains words that were spoken by angels, demons, apostles, Satan, and prophets. Therefore, the reader must determine who is speaking. When one considers I Corinthians 14:34-35, he or she will discover that these were the Apostle Paul's instructions to a

⁵⁷ *The New International/King James Version Parallel Bible* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1985), 1429.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1477.

⁵⁹ C. S. Cowles, *A Woman's Place: Leadership in the church* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1993), 28.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

particular people in an effort to restore order in a disorderly church because some women were “disrupting” the worship service. Therefore, Paul insisted that women be silent.

Also, each scripture should be examined in the larger context of all the author writes while considering biblical intentions, purpose, as well as the overall picture of what God is doing in terms of creation, resurrection, redemption, and restoration through and for humanity.⁶¹ Then, one must determine what is descriptive and what is prescriptive in the Bible. Specifically, one should consider if a scripture is describing what took place or if it is “commanding” what is appropriate Christian living. Also, he or she needs to recognize what is historically conditioned and what is “infinite truth.” For example, Paul’s instruction of silencing women and some people’s interpretation of Paul’s instructions (that women should not preach or exercise authority over men) does not prescribe a universal law, but describes how Paul settled a problem in the Ephesus church.⁶² Finally, one should be fully aware of the social, historical, and cultural context that forms scriptural background. Therefore, the task should be to discover what is the ultimate truth of scripture in reference to the proper position of women in the church and perhaps in society?⁶³ To put it briefly, to perform exegesis on scripture, the following questions should be examined: (1) Who is speaking? (2) Who is being addressed? (3) What is actually taking place? (4) What is the author’s intention? (5) How was the scripture read and understood by its original readers? (6) How does the biblical text

⁶¹ Ibid., 33-34.

⁶² C. S. Cowles, *A Woman’s Place: Leadership in the church* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1993), 35.

⁶³ Ibid., 36.

apply to present day realities?⁶⁴ Furthermore, women and/or men's opposition to female leadership in the church, slow ordination process or denial, the appointment process and appointment to smaller churches, and lower clergy salaries are recurring factors that also contribute to religious sexism.

For this research, the question becomes, how does a sexist barrier impact African-American women? Sexist barriers (religious sexism) contribute to slow ordination process, appointment to smaller churches, and/or lower clergy salaries. According to Patricia Hill-Collins, the relationship between gender and race has produced a black gender ideology that shapes ideas about black masculinity and black femininity. This black gender ideology is used to justify patterns of opportunity and discrimination that African-American men and women encounter in institutions, organizations, corporations, and society in general—including the church. Further, black masculinity and black femininity cannot be understood or changed without addressing the politics of sexuality. Sexual politics is a set of ideas and social practices shaped by gender and race, which frames men's and women's treatment of each other as well as how individual men and women perceive and view each other.⁶⁵ Such politics lie at the center of beliefs about black masculinity and femininity, as well as gender specific experiences of African-Americans, which form a new racism. This new racism claims to be colorblind while using mass media to misrepresent African-Americans. This new racism also shifts African-Americans' economic and political disadvantages from structural causes and

⁶⁴ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁵ Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African-Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 6.

insists that African-Americans are solely responsible for these social challenges.⁶⁶

Social inequalities include an examination of the connection between black sexual politics, black gender ideology, and the struggles for African-American empowerment in response to what Hill Collins identifies as the new racism.⁶⁷ Moreover, the researcher agrees with Hill-Collins's statement that African-American women can never become fully empowered in a context that negatively impacts African-American men. Likewise, African-American men can never become fully empowered in a society where African-American women are not allowed to fully participate and thrive as human beings. In essence, black sexual politics emphasizes a commitment to social justice for all people regardless of gender, for this reason it is a global striving for human rights.⁶⁸

In short, women are still regarded and treated as second class citizens. One primary reason is because of their productive and reproductive capabilities.⁶⁹ Another reason is the recording of history from a male perspective. According to sociologist Dorothy Smith, research about women's experience and society in general, told from a woman's point of view is necessary for at least two reasons: (1) Societal development has been developed primarily from a male perspective, and (2) Women have been systematically excluded from religious, historical, social, political, and philosophical ideologies.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 7-9.

⁶⁹ Janice Wood-Wetzel. *The World of Women: In Pursuit of Human Rights* (Houndmills: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1993), 33-34.

Sometimes, women can be their own worst enemies. For example, the institution of sexism can be so sullen, and ingrained in the minds of women that some of them are not aware they are supporting it. Perhaps, some have accepted it as the natural order of life. Furthermore, some women are resentful of others who step outside prescribed feminine roles into “traditional male occupations”. Envy is sometimes an emotion experienced by women with such attitudes. Likewise, these types of behaviors usually foster a fear of another’s success: self-pity, insecurity, and identification with a clearly defined subordinate social role.⁷¹ Furthermore, in the name of survival and advancement, women like men participate in the subordination of women. This type of aggression can be both verbal and nonverbal and includes slander and gossip. Phyllis Chesler’s *Woman’s Inhumanity To Woman* implies that as women increasingly enter into male dominated professions, many will experience direct competition among themselves – in such an environment women can be most difficult towards each other; particularly when functioning under male domination. Also, women in the workplace have a tendency to behave in sexist ways and to project double standards in terms of gender. Further, incompetent or less competent subordinates may also display jealousy and insecure behavior towards anyone they perceive to be their strongest contender.⁷² Perhaps, women’s internalized sexism and sometimes overt sexist attitudes and behaviors contribute to woman’s inhumanity to woman. However, it is believed by some that many

⁷⁰ Ibid., 34-35.

⁷¹ Mary Bader Papa. *Christian Feminism: Completing the Subtotal Woman* (United States of America: Fides Claretin Books, 1981), 104-111.

⁷² Phyllis Chesler, *Woman’s Inhumanity To Woman* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, Nation Books, 2001), 25-37.

of the sexist views portrayed by some women towards other women in the workplace are only a perpetuation of male/female oppression that has long existed in the secular and sacred arenas.⁷³

Methodology

This investigation is an explanatory research that also utilizes the case study method to analyze sexism within the Methodist Church. The desire to know and to explain is the intent of explanatory research.⁷⁴ In addition, explanatory research identifies the reason something occurs as it searches for causes and reasons (i.e., this investigation is most interested in why sexism exists in the Methodist Church). In other words, this study aims to advance general knowledge about the impact of sexism on African-American women ministers. Moreover, a case study method is being used because of the sample size which is selected for this research. Cases can be groups, individuals, organizations, events, movements, and/or geographic units. Most involve detailed, extensive, and varied qualitative data about only a small selection of cases. Qualitative case study and research are not exactly the same; however, most qualitative research aims to construct representations based on detailed knowledge of cases.⁷⁵ In other words, a researcher may examine one or more cases and compare a limited set of cases with focuses on several factors. In any event, a case study uses logic generated from analytical data instead of numeric data or mathematical demonstrations. Then the

⁷³ Ibid., 335-356.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁷⁵ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 4th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 32.

researcher selects one or more cases to illustrate an issue and then studies it or them in detail. Also, the researcher considers the specific context of the case study and examines it. Finally, a case study's primary purpose is to demonstrate an argument about general social forces that shape and produce results. The research should also raise questions about the boundaries and characteristics of an investigation; therefore, case studies will most likely produce the best theory.⁷⁶ Hence, this study arrived out of a pilot study that was conducted in 2004 under the direction of Dr. Jacquelyn Grant. During this pilot study, the researcher interviewed a total of three subjects, one AME clergywoman, one CME clergywoman, and one UMC clergywoman. The pilot study indicated that the interpretation of scripture, clergywomen's appointment to smaller churches, and men and/or women's opposition to female leadership in the church are factors influencing religious sexism.

Sample

The stratified random sample consisted of thirty African-American women ministers from three major/mainstream denominations (the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church). This research analyzed two different types of ministries: (1) An academic ministry is a position held by someone who may or may not be licensed or ordained, but nonetheless teaches on the collegiate level as well as teaches or preaches outside an academic institution, and (2) The parish ministry is a position held by someone who is licensed and ordained while primarily teaching or preaching in a local church or serves in the hierarchy of a denomination.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 33-35.

Each African-American clergywoman was selected from one of the following categories: Bishop, District Superintendent, Presiding Elder, Pastor, Elder, Chaplain, or scholar. In some instances participants were randomly selected from a list of names made available by agencies (Black Methodists for Church Renewal and CME on Women in Ministry) of the denominations being studied. In other cases, participants were selected from referrals made by individuals either inside or outside the denominations studied. In making participant selections, the researcher aimed for a geographical spread that will specifically concentrate on African-American women ministers within Methodism.

Procedures

The procedures (or steps in collecting data) were that the participants were asked to review the interview questions at least one week in advance, and then a tape recorded interview culminated via telephone or person-to-person. The tape recorded interview lasted sixty minutes. It took three months to complete the interview process, and ten days to transcribe the interviews.

Instrument

The first part of the interview schedule included a biographical sketch of participants' full names, past and present occupations, job titles, degrees earned, as well as their childhood and future aspirations. The second part of the interview schedule placed emphasis on the women's perceptions of the existence of sexism in Methodism and how it impacted African-American women ministers. Therefore, this part of the interview schedule included sixteen ministerial questions that fit into seven factors.

Factor one is men and/or women's opposition to female leadership in the church. It included the questions: What is sexism? Do you think sexism exists in the church—why or why not? Is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not? Factor two is socio-political-theological systems. It included the questions: Do you agree that socio-political-theological systems exist in the church—why or why not? How have socio-political-theological systems impacted your ministerial career? Factor three is perceptions of inferiority. It included the questions: Does inferiority exist in the church—why or why not? Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not? Factor four is the interpretation of scripture. It included the questions: What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church? What scriptures, if any, are used to support the ordination and/or women being ministers? Factor five is slow ordination process or denial? It included the questions: What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination? In what stages of your career did you seek ordination and why? Factor six is the appointment process and/or clergywomen's appointment to smaller churches. It included the questions: Do you have equal access to all leadership roles in the church—why or why not? Do you think women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the church—why or why not? In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process? Factor seven is lower clergy salaries. It included the questions: Is it true that clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen—why or why not? Do you think clergywomen should earn the same salary as clergymen—why or why not?

Research Questions

In order to observe and analyze why sexism exists in the church today and how it impacts the lives of African-American Methodist women ministers, this study undertakes the following research questions:

1. What factors have contributed to an increase in women's responses to sexism in the Methodist church?
2. What challenges confront women in their pursuit of ordination?
3. What are clergywomen's perceptions of male attitudes toward female leadership in the church?

Limitations of the Study

In terms of the limitations of the study, documented scholarly studies about the impact of African-American women's experiences in general and African-American women ministers (in Methodism) are extremely rare. Furthermore, the study describes experiences of only some (African-American women ministers) women; making it a narrow focus. However, this study may provide a key to the larger experience of women in both the sacred and secular world. Such observations are only meant to underline the significance of certain responses in relationship to the specific sample interviewed in this case study. The sample is limited only to women and is not inclusive of men, and all branches of Methodism. Also, the research analysis may be heuristic in nature in terms of unearthing answers to the following questions: What factors contributed to an increase in women's responses to sexism? What impact does women's ordination have on the existing presence of male domination in roles, such as Bishop, District Superintendent, Presiding Elder, Pastor, Elder, Chaplain, and scholar? What are male leadership

attitudes towards female leadership in the church? The limitations of the study in regards to oral history testimony/interviews may result in an analysis that is narrow, biased, and/or ethnocentric.⁷⁷ For example, only a few women were randomly selected to participate in this study therefore, omitting the voices of white women, men, and others who could possibly shed light on the impact of sexism in the church.

However, it is difficult to locate detailed data, such as, the number of African-American Methodist clergywomen who have served in ministry from 1980-2000, their titles, positions, dates of birth, and salaries. As a result much of the scholarly work covering the past twenty years either does not exist or is scattered in many different “unknown places,” making it difficult to construct a more vivid picture of their history as it relates to their experiences in Methodism.

Organization of the Chapters

Chapter One provides the purpose, the Conceptual Framework and the Methodology. Chapter Two, the Literature Review, refers to research previously conducted on the impact and existence of sexism in the church. The literature review utilized secondary sources that explain why sexism existed in the church and how sexism impacts employees in the workplace. Chapter Three, the Context of the Problem examines the disparities women encounter when pursuing positions as pastors, preachers, and full ordination rights within the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church between 1980-2000. Chapter Four documents the history of African-American women ministers in selected

⁷⁷ Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide For Social Scientists* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1994), 16.

Methodist denominations. This chapter also includes a brief history of the AME, CME, and UMC denominations, and the ordination of women. Chapter Five analyzes thirty interviews of African-American Methodist clergywomen. Chapter Six, summarizes the research and offers recommendations that suggest possible solutions to be addressed in future research. This study aimed to analyze sexism as it exists within the Methodist denominations, and how it impacts the lives of African-American clergywomen.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature presents a convergence of views describing the impact of sexism on women ministers as well as the impact of sexism on women in the workplace. The literature review also identifies several key factors that influence sexism in the Methodist denomination. These key factors include: (1) Socio-political-theological systems, (2) The interpretation of scripture, (3) Perception of inferiority, (4) Men and/or women's opposition to female leadership, (5) Slow ordination process or denial, (6) The appointment process and appointment to smaller churches, and (7) Lower clergy salaries. In addition, research has concluded that ordained African-American Methodist clergywomen have increased significantly. Nonetheless, clergywomen are still plagued by obstacles of sexism. This is due, in part, to the socio-political-theological system of masculine dominance which has persisted for centuries, including the last two decades.

Most of the information in this chapter addresses the existing literature based on women's journey toward ministry that has typically not been without hindrances, such as, sexism and women citing differences between themselves, male ministers, and sexism in the workplace. Hence, *Witnessing and Testifying – Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights*, by Rosetta Ross, reinforces African-American women's passion for protest, gender equality and the elevation of the black family. Together, African-American

women activists and African-American men within the sacred and secular arena fought against the injustices of racism. Rosetta Ross insists that African-American preachers who served as primary leaders during the 1950s and 1960s are examples of women for racial uplift.¹ In addition, the Civil Rights Movement was at its peak during the same time when feminist and womanist scholars were demanding recognition. African-American women's experiences as civil rights activists helped establish a foundation and provide an opportunity to transition from mere survival and resistance of racial oppression to full social participation and deliberate resistance against gender oppression in the workplace (i.e., corporate America, governmental agencies, denominational hierarchies, and other organizations as well).

Further, Ross indicates that African-American religious women's activists were concerned about the survival and liberation of themselves. It appears that African-American women activists of the Civil Rights Era, and African-American women ministers of today, are concerned with racial uplift, full social participation, and gender oppression. Furthermore, these women are primarily concerned with the well-being of the entire African-American community as they strive to carve out equal rights for women and solidarity with the African-American man.² Ross claims that some women of the Civil Rights Movement lived with convictions that derived from their perception as religious persons. These shared convictions attributed to their participation as activists for racial uplift and the elimination of racism. *Witnessing and Testifying—Black Women*,

¹ Rosetta Ross, *Witnessing and Testifying – Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 1-3.

² Ibid., 10-15.

Religion, and Civil Rights: 1980-2000 is concerned with the ongoing distress in African-American women ministers' lives.³ Ross argues that African-American women's civil rights activism is their female enactment of black religious values that reflects on internal concern for the African-American community's survival, and an effort to address society's traditional sources of inequality, such as sexism.

Gloria I. Joseph and Jill Lewis's research is an examination of the ways in which race and class intersect in the oppression of women. The authors argue that racial and sexual factors play a role in the oppression of all women in the workplace and in society in general. However, what are detestable are the ways in which racism and sexism impact African-Americans and white women. Moreover, these efforts take into account the class and race differences experienced by African-Americans and white women. Also, this study attempts to recognize the varying political factors and points of view shared by both the women's and liberation movement. The researchers insist there is a dominant white culture whose racism affects the lives of all Americans. Furthermore, the research analysis focused on how women experience oppression collectively, as it considers the dynamics of gender power.⁴

Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives, by Gloria Joseph and Jill Lewis, presents strategies that are geared towards fighting power, oppression, and exploitation, which are the same strategies that are at the center of the black liberation and womanist movements. This study concludes that the white women's

³ Ibid., 220-227.

⁴ Gloria I. Joseph and Jill Lewis, *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives* (New York: South End Press, 1981), 3-4.

movement has had its own forms of racism in the way in which it has given greater priority to certain aspects of issues and neglected others, and has often failed to address the conditions and challenges of African-American women.⁵ Nevertheless, the Women's Movement has and continues to examine the factors that impact women's lives, by examining the causes and effects of sexual division of labor, such as, why men expect to possess positions that receive higher salaries, higher social status, and are therefore, endowed with more power. Women, on the other hand, are expected to accept secondary status which often means lower pay and minimal to no power. Therefore, the Women's Movement asserts that sexuality is political because it encompasses concerns of exploitation, power or the lack thereof, and inequalities posed by discrimination and hatred based on sex.⁶ Unfortunately, African-American women's lives were not taken into account—thus rendering a limited understanding of white women's and African-American women's priorities, concerns, and issues. This study blames a capitalist society, like the United States, and its sexist and racist institutions for these ills.

The text, *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives*, strongly suggests that a different set of stereotypes and dynamics exist for African-American and white women. In essence, white women (particularly middle to upper class white women) have traditionally benefited as daughters and/or wives of white privileged and powerful men. However, most African-American women either had no father figure or a father who possessed minimal or no power. This research encourages African-American women to develop and maintain their own racist, sexist, and political

⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

challenges in keeping with their personal consciousness, while considering and maintaining a consciousness for the African-American community—including African-American men. In addition, this research concludes that the United States is a society that has systematically institutionalized male power in its political, cultural, and economic structures.⁷

George Davis and Gregg Watson's text, *Black Life In Corporate America: Swimming in the Mainstream*, examines the concerns of African-Americans entering into managerial (mainstream) positions in corporate America. Among the people interviewed in this text there was no surprise concerning the progression that white women have made in the United States corporate world. In fact, the authors state that most African-American women agreed they invested more efforts combating sexual discrimination in corporations than combating racial discrimination. Furthermore, African-American women complained that the battle against sexism has been of marginal benefit to them; yet they still have the racial strike against them.⁸ On the other hand, this study exclaims white women's prior assertion that sexist issues are greater than racist ones, and that white men would allow African-American men to gain positions of power before they would allow or accept women of any race in positions of power.⁹

Moreover, this investigation suggests that women controlled about 80 percent of the U.S. private wealth but seldom held powerful positions, such as top level political

⁷ Ibid., 123-127.

⁸ George Davis and Gregg Watson, *Black Life In Corporate America: Swimming in the Mainstream* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1982), 143-144.

⁹ Ibid., 144.

offices, public service industries, and members of boards of directors. However, white women dominated teaching, nursing, library, and social service occupations at one time. Nevertheless, most of the supervisory positions in these occupations were held primarily by white men. In addition, women were often paid less for equal work.¹⁰ This research insists that white women often were subjected to cruel stereotyping, but no more than the normal stereotyping ascribed to white men. The differences lie in barriers used to prevent women from obtaining positions of power and elite corporate privileges, such as higher salaries. Consequently, this study proposes that white women's positions in general were never as bad as that of African-Americans.¹¹ Further, white women have been familiar with corporate America long before African-American women. Many of them know how to interact, survive, and even thrive (as some would say—play the game) in corporate America without creating intimidation or suspicion because they were raised by powerful father figures. In contrast, African-American girls usually had no father figure or no father who possessed positions of power.¹² Perhaps, these significant differences yielded advantages for white women and disadvantages for African-American women.

In other words, George Davis and Gregg Watson's research examines corporate America and the African-American life within it. Indeed, this study strongly suggests that some African-Americans connect with corporate America very well because they have mastered strategies and techniques for surviving sexist, racist, and diversity

¹⁰ Ibid., 145.

¹¹ Ibid., 146-147.

¹² Ibid., 147-148.

disparities. These strategies and techniques include: (1) A willingness to work hard and produce consistent outstanding performance, (2) To always possess a high-level of corporate understanding and self-confidence because it helps one to excel at playing the corporate game, (3) To continuously make necessary sacrifices, (4) To be forever committed to excellence, (5) To have a good education, such as the MBA which opens doors to corporate opportunities, and (6) To display excellent communication skills at all times.¹³ Although, these qualities help one to climb the corporate ladder, most likely they will not prevent one from experiencing sexism and/or racism.

Ignacio L. Gotz's, *The Culture of Sexism*'s primary purpose is to provide a better understanding of why modern societies continue to be sexist. This text proposes that sexism is rooted in a society's culture as well as its institutions. This text also examines the conditions of sexism in our culture, such as sexism based on psychological interpretation as well as extreme conservative views which indicate that God has ordained men's domination over women. In addition, this text examines sexism from political, economical, social, and institutional perspectives. However, the major trend appears to be religious and secular.

Also Gotz's text presents several views that seek to explain why sexism continues to exist. Some view sexism as directly linked to the exercise of power, economics, or politics. Some view sexism as an imbedded ancient social practice that dictates present day stereotypical roles. The formal view suggests that an uneven sharing of power usually equals an uneven distribution of economics, which could possibly be eliminated through the empowering of women at the political and economic levels. The latter view

¹³ Ibid., 149-157.

proposes that male and female roles are dictated by individual's self-concepts, social orientations, and individual perspectives. However, religious view seeks to understand sexist ideologies of patriarchal religious systems.

In any event, Ignacio L. Gotz's view of sexism arises, in part, out of a subconscious male envy of the female ability to conceive (referred to as womb envy) representing the females distinctive capability to conceive and give birth to a child.¹⁴ The culprit of this male envy is that women have something that men do not and may never obtain—conception and the ability to give birth. This subconscious fear or perhaps inferiority complex contributes to the males' desire to dominate and control women. In other words, *The Culture of Sexism* provides contemporary analyses of sexism from economic, social, and political perspectives. Again, Gotz argues that sexism arises in part, out of a subconscious male envy of women's capacity to conceive a child—something the men lack and/or are incapable of obtaining. Gotz insists that the institution of schooling perpetuates womb envy which is directly associated with sexism and all it represents.¹⁵

The text, *Sex and the Workplace: The Impact of Sexual Behavior and Harassment on Women, Men, and Organization*, is an investigation of the effects of sex at work on individuals and organizations. It also emphasizes how both males and females are expected to accept prescribed roles and how problems arise when women refuse to do so. Further, it elaborates on sexual harassment, its implications, how individuals react to it, and the kind of environment that fosters such problems. For instance, Gutek's research

¹⁴ Ignacio L. Gotz, *The Culture of Sexism* (Westport: Praeger, 1999), 33-38.

¹⁵ Ibid., 73-80.

suggests that women are impacted by sexism in the workplace more often than men. This research also indicates that women do not initiate sexual harassment at work as frequently as men. However, men discuss sex more and use it to express themselves through power, dominance, and friendship toward women. This study concludes that sexism and sexual harassment is a serious problem in the workplace.

According to Barbara Gutek, sexual harassment of a woman by a man is an example of sexism because the act embodies fundamental gender stereotypes—men as sexual conquerors and women as sexually conquered. Moreover, sexual harassment between any two people, regardless of sex, is a form of sexual discrimination when it reflects or perpetuates gender stereotypes in the workplace. Again, a set of gender norms that seek to feminize women and masculinize men lends itself to sexism. A commonly used definition of sexual harassment is unwanted sexual overtures that include one's behavior, intentions, and motives.¹⁶ Gutek presents three different perspectives on sexual harassment: (1) The feminist perspective reflects on power relationships, economic coercion, rape, the status of women in society, and women's sexual role over her work roles, (2) The legal perspective is concerned with explosive unequal power relationships at work; it is used as a basis for making employment decisions, promoting intimidating and offensive work environments, and producing consequences of refusal of and/or submission to sexual advances, and (3) The organizational perspective reflects on

¹⁶ Barbara A. Gutek, *Sex and the Workplace: The Impact of Sexual Behavior and Harassment on Women, Men, and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), 6.

a possible “love affair” that grows bitter, by examining if circumstances have hurt someone else or if the organization’s reputation has been jeopardized.¹⁷

In short, the feminist perspective views sexual harassment as a result of a sexist society—the workplace is only another place where men can exercise their power. The legal perspective recognizes societal influences on sexual harassment, and seeks to make changes in regulations and policies in the workplace. The modern day organizational management perspective views inappropriate sexual advances as individual’s misuse of power and a possible threat to the organizations reputations.¹⁸ In essence, Gutek claims that sexual harassment separates a means of enforcing and supporting traditional gender norms.

Trudy J. Hanmer insists that the lack of jobs accessible to women, low salaries, and women’s lack of educational opportunities are greatly impacted by sexism and sex discrimination. Consequently, these disparities determine the limited or lack of power women possess in our society. In addition, date rape, battering of women, and pornography are directly associated with women’s lack or limitation of power. In contrast, Hanmer insists that men also are impacted by sexism. For instance, society’s unrealistic expectations of men as financial providers, and as mentally and physically resilient have proven to be too overwhelming for some men—thus creating stress related complications in men’s lives.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁸ Ibid., 11-12.

¹⁹ Trudy J. Hanmer, *Taking A Stand Against Sexism and Sex Discrimination* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1990), 11-12.

According to Hammer's text, *Taking A Stand Against Sexism and Sex Discrimination*, there are various arguments explaining why sexism and sex discrimination exist. One biological argument is an assumption that biology and nature is the same; therefore, this "natural order" of the universe should remain undisturbed. Accordingly, this natural order has ordained that women bear children and be more nurturing than men. This type of perception supports and justifies men's domination and women's subordination.²⁰ Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why some people expect men to be leaders or to serve in positions of power. On the contrary, women are often expected to occupy positions, such as teachers and nurses. Here again, these types of perceptions support stereotypical behaviors of traditional mind sets. Furthermore, biological justifications continue to lend themselves into the twenty-first century. Hammer's biological arguments appear to give sex discrimination "scientific proof" that those women are not capable of successfully fulfilling positions of leadership and power.²¹

Another factor to consider is the impact of religious views about women. Truly, sexism has been deeply rooted in religious institutions and organizations for centuries. St. Paul wrote that women should be silent in the church, but if they have a question they should ask their husband at home; therefore, Roman Catholics and some Protestant denominations still prohibit the ordination of women. Nonetheless, the Episcopal denominations began ordaining women in 1970. Truly, this text is about specific roles in

²⁰ Ibid., 19.

²¹ Ibid., 22.

society based on gender and about preventing people from obtaining certain positions, and creating different laws for different people based on sex.²²

Without any doubt, some people view the movement to eliminate sexism as taboo. Trudy J. Hanmer, claims that some people define sexism as an attack against family structure—oftentimes believing it leads to family destruction—when in fact families are making necessary changes that are inevitable. Nevertheless, prevalent sex discrimination and sexism is an indication of how little America has changed.²³ Hanmer's work mentions at least three conventional beliefs that purposively undergird sexism in the workplace: (1) The belief that men are stronger and more objective; women are more nurturing and emotional—indicating that men and women are designed to fulfill different roles and positions at home and at work, (2) The belief that men should automatically be in authority which warrants justification for men receiving higher salaries, and (3) The belief that women work because they want to and that this work outside the private sphere will end once she gives birth to a child.²⁴ Although women have occupied most occupations since the 1950s, the above stated conventional beliefs relentlessly impact the way women are valued. Likewise, sexism and sex discrimination continue to contribute to the oppression of women.

According to John F. Fernandez, the United States has failed to effectively address the challenges presented by diversity, sexism, and racism. The author also insists

²² Ibid., 10.

²³ Ibid., 102-103.

²⁴ Ibid., 110.

that companies have failed to take a holistic approach to eliminating ills because they attempt to deal with them separately rather than trying to fix them as interrelated issues that impact both customers and employees.²⁵ Likewise, companies must address human resource, customer, employee, and stockholder issues. In addition, this study strongly suggests that white women are more visible in middle management in some industries; yet African-Americans have made minimal progression beyond lower level management positions in almost every industry.²⁶ This investigation also examines data about human behavior and our ways of thinking. In doing so, the text states that organizations must grasp a broader knowledge of human nature in order to overcome poor customer relationships.²⁷

Overall, Fernandez's investigation strongly suggests that sexism and racism continue to impact the careers of African-Americans and women in America. Furthermore, affirmative action and diversity programs are suggested as solutions or methods to eliminate ills plaguing U.S. corporations. Moreover, affirmative action programs that are designed to ensure a fair and equitable representation of African-Americans and women in corporate America will not experience the epitome of success until they recognize and set in motion a system for eliminating sexism and racism. In short, John P. Fernandez insists that sexism and racism will continue to be a major barrier for African-Americans and women until white men in positions of power lead the

²⁵ John P. Fernandez, *Race, Gender Rhetoric: The True State of Race and Gender in Corporate America* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1999), 1.

²⁶ Ibid., 4.

²⁷ Ibid., 9.

initiative to eliminate them. Likewise, affirmative action and diversity programs will continue to be useful tools necessary to eradicate systems of racism and sexism.

Moreover, Johnetta Betsch-Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftal insist that African-American women are convinced that there is a conspiracy by white America to destroy African-American men; therefore, African-American women remain silent about the physical and emotional abuse they suffer. By the same token, African-American communities' negative responses to airing their dirty linen also appear to be muted when the objects of the attack are African-American women.²⁸ This investigation states that white patriarchal ideas, such as, male dominance and female submission is partly to blame. The authors of this text insist that sexual hostility against African-American women is not only practiced by white racist society, but it also is practiced by African-American men and institutions. Therefore, "truth telling" about African-American community issues will assist in unearthing the complexity of race and gender.²⁹

Betsch-Cole and Guy-Sheftal's research also explores ramifications of ideas and values about gender as they relate to rituals and daily practices of African-American churches. They also examine patterns of resistance to patriarchy that date back to early church women.³⁰ This research strongly suggests that the African-American church is an institution that is a critical site for the subordination of women and the perpetuation of gender oppression. On the other hand, it is a place where womanist and feminist

²⁸ Johnetta Betsch-Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftal, *Gender Talk: The Struggle For Women's Equity in the African-American Community* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 2003), 78-84.

²⁹ Ibid., 1-6.

³⁰ Ibid., 104.

theologians challenge ideas and practices of inequality. Without any doubt, the African-American church has been one of the most important and influential institutions in the African-American community. It instills values that dictate individual behaviors. Yet, it remains a precious institution and the Bible is its most important reference.³¹

According to *Gender Talk: the Struggle for Women's Equity in the African-American Community*, one of the hidden race secrets in the African-American communities revolves around issues of sexuality and the church. While some African-American women have overtly rejected patriarchal ideas and structures within Christendom, many have not, choosing instead to internalize sexist ideologies.³² Moreover, the authors of this text state that African-American theologians and church leaders have progressive and revolutionary ideas regarding the equality of African-Americans in society; oftentimes they do not have similar ideas regarding gender equality in the church.³³ Thankfully, there is a growing body of preachers and scholars who are practicing womanist philosophy which engages in gender equality and liberation theology.

However, Betsch-Cole and Guy-Sheftal thoroughly cover ways in which gender and race impact the lives of African-American communities. Although African-American men are often prevented from possessing traditional gender roles as protector and provider, many of them continue to perpetuate notions of masculine dominance that

³¹ Ibid., 104-106.

³² Ibid., 114-115.

³³ Ibid., 121-123.

is evident in white culture.³⁴ The authors insist that African-American men's perception of their perceived dominant status impacts their identity in ways that may explain other aspects of their behavior. For instance, when African-American men are unable to be a part of the larger culture's traditional system, they may compensate by exaggerating whatever remains of normative gender roles. What remains of his manhood demands that he dominate whatever he can—the African-American woman, community, and institutions. The authors insist this type of behavior results in exaggerated sexuality that oftentimes leads to black on black crime.³⁵ They also conclude that in some strange way this type of violence is about obtaining manhood.

Sally B. Purvis builds upon historically religious facts as she considers congregational statistical information and social change centered on the transition of women into ordained leadership in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Her assessment of two women pastors in two mainstream Protestant congregations in the late twentieth century includes an analysis of each pastor's leadership strengths and weaknesses. Purvis' primary foci appear to be: how her participants (women) are coping with gender barriers, the impact that the leadership of clergywomen has on the churches they lead, and how the leadership reflects on issues surrounding the power of clergymen in mainstream congregations.

Purvis argues that the ministries of her two clergywomen's participants were part of a quiet revolution. It is interesting that Purvis would use the term quiet to describe

³⁴ Ibid., 129-132.

³⁵ Ibid., 134-137.

what some would consider a very vocal movement about the injustices women encounter in society. In addition, the author insists that both pastors in this study consistently display strong organizational and political leadership qualities—which some scholars claim are primarily male leadership traits.³⁶ Purvis also suggests that the combination of traditional roles in unconventional ways somehow contribute to the elimination of prescribed gender roles and increased social tolerance for diversity. Moreover, this study asserts that it is not just those who are blatantly unconventional that challenge traditions, rather those who embrace traditional roles in unconventional combinations and contribute to the crumbling of traditional gender expectations and aid in the changing of the gendering of persons and roles.³⁷

The Stained Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors strongly suggests that the two female participants observed in this investigation are very comfortable with power and authority. In fact, they are conventional, yet they appear to be content with their lives as heterosexual women. Further, each pastor possesses her own unique pattern of leadership while managing her own congregation effectively.³⁸ Moreover, Purvis defines power as “the ability to accomplish desired ends,” the author uses the term power as control, life, and love. According to her, desired ends are accomplished by using others as instruments of one’s own purposes. Observations by Purvis indicate that the two female pastors in this study challenge the patriarchal

³⁶ Sally B. Purvis, *The Stained Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 10-13.

³⁷ Ibid., 11-14.

³⁸ Ibid., 3-5.

discourse of the social constructs of their reality by rejecting prescribed traditional female roles. Further, the author insists that many groups who find themselves in marginal political or social positions have no choice, but to transgress social norms of the so-called power groups: race and sex orientation are indeed primary areas where change is inevitable.³⁹

In conclusion, the interactions of the pastors observed in this study suggest that the presence of female leadership in their congregations is proof that profound changes in the roles of women and men are indeed transforming the social construction of gender itself. This study concluded that the dynamic of expanding gender expectations was a recurring theme, and those female pastors lead in ways that are not necessarily associated with being female, in fact both congregations' expectations are being broadened.⁴⁰

According to other studies cited in this text, a woman pastoring large congregations in an urban setting is not exactly the norm. This study also indicates that women are enrolling in seminary in large numbers even as the number of male enrollment is declining. Purvis insists that the presence of female pastors in the U.S. churches, though confined mostly to associate pastor positions, smaller churches, and lower salaries will continue to increase.

But They Won't Talk With A Woman: The Processing of a Model for Confronting Issues Between Female and Male Clergy, by Thomas W. Waitschies and Leta Gorrham, emphasizes clergywomen's personal journeys through challenges of pursuing ordination as well as positions as pastor and bishop. Leta Gorham and others like her have found

³⁹ Ibid., 85-86.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 86-101.

themselves among the marginalized and oppressed. The authors of this text agree there have been too many contradictions between what is professed and what is practiced by the church in general. Both authors also agree that African-Americans have endured inappropriate behavior from their white sisters and brothers as well; therefore, this text is a tool utilized to address sexism and racism.⁴¹

Waitschies and Gorham explain that men and women view justice from different perspectives. For instance, justice for many men means possession of power and money. In contrast, women view justice as support and respect. Accordingly, these primary attributes result in women losing the money and the power that goes with it. In fact, Waitschies holds this theory to be true for all oppressed groups. In addition, both authors of this study agree with this theory as it relates to men, women, and money.⁴² Gorham insists that the traditional concept of power is linked to money. Consequently, one example of perpetuating this tradition is by assigning male pastors to larger churches and paying them higher salaries.⁴³ Finally, Gorham argues that ordained women awaiting appointments are often met with statements like, "But they won't talk with women". Such a statement usually means the end of any consideration or negotiation between a particular church and the powers that be. In other words, a female pastor is rejected by the parish, and another church that will consider her leadership has to be located.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Leta Gorham and Thomas W. Waitschies, *But They Won't Talk With A Woman: The Processing of a Model for Confronting Issues Between Female and Male Clergy* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1998), 1-9.

⁴² Ibid., 13.

⁴³ Ibid., 31.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41.

Wyatt M. Rogers, Jr. in his text describes discriminatory practices against Christian women. The portraits clearly display vivid images of male chauvinism and misogyny. Rogers argues that they denote various ways men seek to control and restrict the status and activities of women. In this picture, it is also clear that masculine beliefs are in both the secular and sacred arenas. Also, many of the males presented in this text use the Bible to validate and support their sexist attitudes and behaviors. Rogers insists that resistance against women's ordination permeates from both laymen and clergy. He states that the Bible is one primary tool used by traditionalists to substantiate gender oppression. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 are used to prohibit women from speaking in the church, and from having authority over men. Nevertheless, the contentions over these scriptures are highly debatable. While some people take these scriptures literally, others believe that Apostle Paul was simply settling a dispute between the males and females in Corinthians; thereby, placing restrictions upon the women in the Corinthian province. Paul did not intend for these commands to apply to all women and certainly not twenty-first century women. Seemingly, those opposed to women's ordination on these grounds are often joined by those who hold that women are the weaker sex and are otherwise inferior to men in the presence of God and are thus not qualified as teachers.⁴⁵

On the other hand, those favoring the ordination of women are not biologically, intellectually, nor emotionally inferior. They also observed that women are not usually physically stronger than men as revealed in longer life spans. Many studies reveal that

⁴⁵ Wyatt M. Rogers, Jr., *Christianity and Womanhood: Evolving Roles and Responsibilities* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 4-5.

women are at least intellectually and emotionally equal to men.⁴⁶ This study also reveals that the slight increase in the number of women being elevated has indeed been aided by the women's emancipation movement. Subsequent advances such as equal pay legislation also have had a significant impact on women's roles in the workplace and to a lesser extent in the churches. In contrast, women's accomplishments have had little effect on women's ordination rights.⁴⁷

According to Rogers, the participation for women in ordained or elected positions is a far cry compared to that of the overall societal workplace. This study suggests that, as we enter the twenty-first century, women will constitute the majority of the American population and a larger proportion of the workforce. Secular policies and trends have provided increasing vocations and other opportunities for women. A growing number of women are achieving political, education, and business positions. The majority of college and university students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels are now women.⁴⁸ Despite such progress, widespread discrimination remains among many evangelical and fundamentalist denominations. This study indicates that these groups have refused to ordain women based on biblical scripture, and have adopted doctrinal positions that would penalize member churches by withholding financial aid.⁴⁹

Roger's study reveals that substantial progress has been made toward the elimination of discrimination, but women advocates point to many other roles in religious

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 10.

institutions that have been overlooked or ignored. However, many feminists do not support or even consider church women's issues; they seem to believe the church itself signifies oppression.⁵⁰

Roger's investigation strongly suggests that many mainstream denominations have adopted formal policies approving the ordination and commissioning of women deacons, elders, and pastors. While this development has eliminated one major barrier directly related to women's ministry, other issues, such as favoritism among the male hierarchy, inequitable compensation for women pastors, ministerial assignments that are less recognizable, reduced advancement potential, and fewer fringe benefits for female pastors are barriers for women.⁵¹ Although discrimination has been reduced, bias continues to exist.

Moreover, the author of this text asserts that the argument against women's ordination usually relies on a strict and literal interpretation of the Pauline letters, the patriarchal traditions of the past, and the concept of the "fallen" role of women following Eve's commission of sin in the Garden of Eve. Evidently, male chauvinism also plays a major role in the elevation of men. The belief that males are physically larger than women, and the assumption that men are stronger mentally, are perpetual myths. These types of thought patterns continue to filter into religious institutions influencing church policies that negatively impact the advancement of women into leadership positions.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁵¹ Ibid., 36.

⁵² Ibid., 42.

Roger's study as well as others insists that the ordination of women is one of the most controversial issues in Christian ministry. Ordination implies that some form of spiritual authority and/or mandate for service is conveyed to a person upon his or her receipt of laying on of hands by peers or clerical authorities. Under this concept, ordination is limited to only those persons selected by their peers to the church hierarchy for a position requiring such a conferral.⁵³ Roger's investigation contends that through the years women have experienced both elevation and stagnation in social and religious institutions. Protestant churches are very much a part of these changes. Protestant churches are ordaining women as pastors, deacons, and missionaries. This research insists that for many years, the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Southern Baptist denominations tabled the official doctrines allowing female ordination. However, the Southern Baptist church drafted a resolution discouraging its member churches from ordaining women.⁵⁴ Regardless, of SBC sanctions, member churches were free to establish policies and procedures without regard to the annual convention, including the ordination of women. Accordingly, many Southern Baptist churches have ordained women as deacons over the past twenty years and some have even allowed some women to pastor.⁵⁵ This study also indicates that a recurring complaint by women pastors is the tendency for women to be appointed to smaller churches, or in multiple churches which often have stagnant or declining membership in communities with few prospects for

⁵³ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 87-88.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 88-89.

growth. On the other hand, their male counterparts are rewarded with more affluent growing congregations.⁵⁶ However, the ordination of women has not eliminated religious sexism.

The Order of Ministry in the United Methodist Church, by John E. Harnish, provides an overall basic understanding of the ordination process within Methodism. One of the most important positions in the Christian Church is the office of ordained ministries, such as Bishop, Pastor, Elder, Presiding Elder, District Superintendent, and Chaplain. However, it is important to know that UMC's definition of clergy includes ordained elders, deacons, and unordained local pastors and commissioned ministers.⁵⁷

Mark Chaves places a lot of emphasis on the internal affairs that influence policy on women's ordination within U.S. denominations during the late nineteenth century. Moreover, Chaves' study includes the granting of full clergy rights to women, and suggests that resistance of gender equality in religious institutions is reinforced through denominational exclusion of women from key leadership positions.⁵⁸ Also, this study mentions sexist attitudes that foster religious sexism (i.e., the author believes that rural congregations are more resistant to ordaining women and accepting women as pastors). Ironically, it is rural congregations that are usually unable to secure clergymen who would commit to the rural appointments.⁵⁹ On the contrary, rural churches are most

⁵⁶ Ibid., 95-96.

⁵⁷ John E. Harnish, *The Orders of Ministry in the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 88.

⁵⁸ Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Institutions* (Cambridge: Howard University Press, 1997), 1-4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 137.

likely appointed to clergywomen parishioners. Further, Chaves' research implies that the women's movement has consistently excluded African-American women's concerns—thus limiting their opportunities in society. Although African-American institutions appear to be more focused on racism than sexism; they are also guilty of regarding gender equality as a low priority.⁶⁰

Chaves' study and many others strongly indicate that the women's movement is a major force forming and changing new ordination policies inside religious institutions.⁶¹ Chaves contends that women's ordination is about gender—not women. Therefore, the true conflict is that some women and men want their denomination to establish one type of organizational structure while others want the denomination to establish a different type of organizational structure.⁶² Chaves argues that herein lies the “true” conflict between genders and gender relations:

In a sense, and with proper qualification, the main point of this book is that the connections... between gender equality and “progressive human society,” “human improvement,” and “modern tendencies” constitute the cultural and ideological context in which formal rules about women's ordination should be understood. If these connections remain as culturally salient, as I believe them still to be, then to resist gender equality is to resist modernizing, liberal agenda within which individuals, and not as members of “natural” groups—families, races, genders—possessing certain gender equality, was, and remains to support the larger project of modernizing.

From this perspective, rules about women's ordination largely serve as symbolic displays to a broader liberal agenda associated with modernity and religious accommodations to the point of the age. From

⁶⁰ Ibid., 138.

⁶¹ Ibid., 139-150.

⁶² Ibid., 189-190.

this perspective, a denomination's formal policy about women's literal status within the denomination is more an enactment of its position vis-à-vis the liberal and modern agenda of institutionalizing individual rights.

Women's ordination, then is about something more than females in religious leadership . . . ⁶³

Chaves' work concentrates on the formal policies of many denominational concerns and the tentative or permanent resolutions that various churches have achieved. Chaves has analyzed sociologically the facts that church policies regarding female clergy fail to correspond to the real world of female ministry. Most importantly women's ordination is about something more than religious leadership, it is about justice for humanity.

Women of the Cloth: A New Opportunity for the churches, by Carroll Jackson, Barbara Hargrove, and Adair Lummis, encompassed many themes pertinent to women ministers, including the challenges surrounding ordination, placement for clergywomen, and salary disparities between male and female clergy. This study focuses on women in parish ministry in nine Protestant denominations. The research questionnaire yielded responses from approximately 1,200 church leaders, which covered a broad range of issues (i.e. attitudes toward clergywomen and conflict among ministerial staff members).⁶⁴ According to this study, during the early 1980s clergywomen were merely tokens in pastoral roles. Although women were labeled as tokens, this research suggests that women also succeeded in ministry. In coordinating the conflicting demands made on professional and private lives, perhaps with some difficulty, but nonetheless, relatively

⁶³ Ibid.191-192.

⁶⁴ Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara Hargrove, and Adair T. Lummis, *Women of the Cloth: A New Opportunity for the churches* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 3-20.

well; and their commitment to their parish ministry was solid. Carroll, Hargrove, and Adair's, investigation on minister self-assessment of their effectiveness shows that both male and female clergy generally rated themselves highly in their task of ministry. Women often felt more competent in areas of public presentation and children education than in the area of balancing budgets. The authors of this study stress that this work focuses on "secondary concerns," such as placement, acceptance, and personal career direction of women ministers.⁶⁵ Moreover, this research addresses issues that may help answer the questions: what differences will women ultimately make in the ministry of the church and what factors have contributed to the increase of ordained clergywomen?

Hence, this investigation strongly indicates that the number of women in ministry has consistently increased over the past twenty years, but alarming male / female disparities are evident. Moreover, clergywomen problems do not lie in securing a first time placement or appointment to a parish. The study shows that 95 percent of clergymen and 85 percent of clergywomen secure first time appointments within six months of approval. However, the challenge lies in subsequent moves within ministry. This occurrence reflects an overly saturated job market as well as speculation that women may not be well accepted as senior pastors, particularly in large suburban churches.⁶⁶ Furthermore, clergywomen's salaries are much lower than clergymen of comparable experience, partially because there are a larger number of clergywomen in part-time

⁶⁵ Ibid., 146-202.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 112-115.

positions.⁶⁷ However, the 1970s marked an intense continuation of modern day protest, especially for African-Americans and women. Carroll, Hargrove, and Lummis insist that the protest was a rhetoric that questioned the possibility that education and proficiency are the only measures of human quality. Therefore, women's contributions are valuable because they were never fully included in sacred or secular textbooks.⁶⁸ Obviously, ordination is one major step toward inclusiveness in the church.

In any event, according to the researchers' details clergywomen's desire to pursue ordination consists of: (1) A fulfillment required to fulfill their call into ministry, (2) Ordination opens the door to a "modern professionalism" (for women) because of its readily competent surplus of women and its institutional closeness to family life, and (3) Its social transformation under the leadership of women. In essence, the authors of this text insist that women's ordination pursuits exemplify radicalism, women's offense to exclusiveness, women's opposition to male language in reference to God, and women's disapproval of hierarchical forms of church policy and the study of God in general.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, cultural stereotypes about appropriate male and female roles continue to dictate what concerns should or should not be addressed. Seminarians are no exception—faculty are usually primarily male, especially at senior-professor levels, inadequate salaries between males and females persist, and clergywomen are more likely

⁶⁷ Ibid., 132-135.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 44-45.

to be appointed to smaller churches.⁷⁰ Overall, clergywomen continue to cope with barriers when considering full participation in ordained ministry.

Research by Bell Hooks' examines the impact of sexism on the African-American woman during slavery, the devaluation of black womanhood, black male sexist systems, racism within the recent feminist movement, and the African-American woman's involvement with feminism.

Further, Bell Hooks stresses that the focus of the black female should be the fight for a liberation that takes place within a feminist movement that has as its fundamental goal—the liberation of all people. Hooks further states that white feminists tend to romanticize the African-American female experience rather than discuss the negative impact of their oppression. However, white feminists either intentionally or unintentionally ignore the reality that to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, and that endurance of any kind is not the same as overcoming oppression; therefore, endurance is not to be confused with transformation.⁷¹ Hooks argues that white feminists and white women in general assume that identifying oneself as oppressed frees one from being an oppressor. To a great extent such ideology prevents white feminists and white women from understanding and overcoming their own sexist and racist attitudes and behaviors toward African-American women. For this reason and others, womanist theologians are compelled to convey the African-American women's experience based on her reality—that is the triple effects of racism, sexism, and

⁷⁰ Ibid., 206-208.

⁷¹ Bell Hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 6-10.

classism. One must discuss the way in which gender oppression operates in conjunction with racism and possibly classism to oppress African-American women in order to extrapolate true analyses of the African-American woman's life and how it is impacted.

Bell Hooks states that racism has not allowed total bonding between white and African-American men on the basis of shared sexism, but such bonding does occur.⁷² Additionally, fighting against sexist oppression is important for black liberation, for as long as sexism divides African-American women and men we cannot concentrate our energies on resisting racism. Many of the tensions and problems in African-American male and female relationships are caused by sexism and sexist oppression.⁷³

In short, African-American women have suffered tremendously under the hand of racism, sexism, and classism. Clearly, the impacts of these "isms" are many: it is that African-American females and males were uncertain about their womanhood and manhood. Therefore, they began to adapt to standards set by the dominant white society. Likewise, some African-Americans believed they could only achieve by conforming to black patriarchy. In contrast, increasing numbers of African-American women are engaging in the feminist and womanist movements in an effort to revise history and to create her-stories.

Phyllis Chesler insists that how women treat each other really does matter. In addition, society can no longer ignore women's plight for political, economic, social, and theological justice. Further, it is believed by some scholars that women treat each other

⁷² Ibid., 100.

⁷³ Bell Hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 116-117.

inhumanely because they are oppressed, subordinated by poverty, racism, classism, and gender.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, silence envelopes woman's inhumanity to woman. It seems as though feminists' primary focus is to obtain gender equality, and womanist theologians' primary concerns include economics, racism, sexism, and classism. However, woman's inhumanity to woman is a common thread that links both movements. In the name of survival and advancement, women like men, participate in the subordination of women. *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman* is a fairly new study that examines what has been labeled "indirect aggression." This type of aggression is both verbal and nonverbal and includes slander and gossip, which has a tendency to result in social or physical death. Therefore, females' indirect aggression impacts lives socially, economically, as well as physically.⁷⁵ Chesler insists that woman's inhumanity to woman has been less studied, discussed, and recognized than male aggression because society devalues women in general.

Some scholars believe that women are as competitive as men, particularly toward each other. As women increasingly enter into male dominated professions, many experience direct competition in the workplace. Consequently, class, gender, race, and economics are further complicated by women's denial of woman to woman overt competition and internalized sexism.⁷⁶ According to Chesler, in *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman*, in male dominated law firms, women often compare and measure their success

⁷⁴ Phyllis Chesler, *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press / Nation Books, 2001), 19.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 25-37.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 335-336.

primarily with other women. However, one study suggests that women's workplace challenges are caused by male domination and promotions of competition among women.⁷⁷ Furthermore, studies suggest women are hardest on each other when functioning under male domination. On the other hand, women work well together in large coed (sex integrated) firms where there are women executives, and in small female dominated firms. However, women in the workplace have a tendency to behave in sexist ways and to project double standards in terms of gender. This study also suggests that women do not behave unethically in order to get ahead, as men sometimes do, women do so because they are jealous or fretful about losing their position to another female competitor. Furthermore, incompetent or less competent subordinates may also display jealousy and insecure behavior towards anyone they perceive as their strongest contender.⁷⁸ Sometimes subordinate and incompetent jealous females utilize workplace confidants to taunt their supervisors. Some types of woman's inhumanity to woman includes: betrayal, attack of work performance, feelings of hostility, and sabotage. At the same time, women have a tendency to be nurturers and sympathizers as well.⁷⁹ Many of the sexist views portrayed by some women towards other women in the workplace are only a perpetuation of male/female oppression that has long existed in secular and sacred institutions and society.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 339.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 349-356.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 352-356.

In conclusion, womanist theology calls into question the oppression of the African-American community, its women, and then families. It also is a reflection of African-American women's place in society, institutions, organizations, and the workplace, while considering African-American women's experiences and concerns surrounding politics, racism, sexism, classism, economics, and access to equal education. Therefore, the harmful empowering of institutions, organizations, and corporations indeed impact the social construction of African-American women. Consequently, the liberation of African-American women also includes the liberation of all people. Since, womanist theology connects and disconnects itself from feminist theology and black theology; the point of departure for black theology is racism. Therefore, black theology examines the gospel in relationship to the concern of African-American people in a society that discriminates on the basis of complexion.

Furthermore, Alice Walker describes a womanist as one who survives in the midst of racial, gender, and economic oppression. In fact, she defines womanist accordingly:

1. From Womanist. (Opp. Of "girlish," i.e. frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "You're acting womanish," i.e, like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous, or willful behavior. Wanting to learn more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown up." Responsible. In charge. Serious.⁸⁰

Womanist survival strategies include the liberation of her family, race, and significant other.

⁸⁰ Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983), xi.

Dr. Jacquelyn Grant concurs with Alice Walker's definition of womanism. Moreover, she argues that all theologians use women's experience as their source, which is also the context in which the Bible as a source is interpreted. She also states that feminist theology is inadequate because it is white and racist, and that feminist theologians are white in terms of their race and in terms of the sources they utilize to construct their theological perspectives. In fact, white women's and black women's experiences are radically different.⁸¹

Unlike white feminist experiences, African-American women's experiences involve racism, classism, and sexism. Black feminism strongly suggests that complete human liberation cannot be achieved by the elimination of any one form of oppression—liberation must incorporate African-American women's reality of oppression. Furthermore, when theologians use women's experience as a source for understanding feminist theology, it is necessary to specify which women's experience is being referenced—for it is understood by womanist theologians that the experiences of African-American women and white women are significantly different.⁸² Dr. Jacquelyn Grant presents concerns that are shared by many womanist scholars:

To be white does not necessarily mean to be racist, though the behavior of whites makes the distinction difficult. Nevertheless, my claim that feminist theology is racist is best supported by my definition of racism... Racism is the tendency of a society to degrade and do violence to people on the basis of race, and by whatever meditations are manifested in different forms, and are carried on through various media: the psychology, sociology, history, economics, and symbolism of the dominant (white)

⁸¹ Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Prose* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1989), 33-34.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 35.

group. Racism is the domination of a people, which is justified by the dominant group on the basis of racial distinction. It is not only individual acts but also a collective, institutionalized activity...⁸³

Grant challenges classical feminist theology stating that it underserves, negates, and/or omits the complete realities of African-American women. Grant contends that African-American women should not name themselves black feminists, as this is a contradiction in terms. For instance, if white women's experience is the foundation for feminist theology, then black women's experiences will indeed yield a different theology—that is womanist. In essence, Grant is suggesting that African-American women execute theology out of their triple experiences of racism, classism, and sexism. This endeavor includes reading and hearing the word of God as well as engaging in it within the context of African-American women's experiences. Stephanie Mitchem also concurs with Alice Walker's definition of womanist. She stresses the need for African-American women's resistance to sexism, especially sexism in the church. She contends that the elimination of sexism will bring healing in the areas of domestic violence, social violence, and other forms of oppression.⁸⁴

Certainly sexism, racism, and classism continue to exist within U.S. corporations, organizations, institutions, and society. Furthermore, this research indicates that sexism and racism have some elements in common, and that the collective struggle of one of these isms probably has real implications for the other. Nonetheless, the struggle for liberation is a struggle towards a new humanness. It is imperative that we take an in-

⁸³ Ibid., 198-200.

⁸⁴ Stephanie Y. Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 25.

depth examination of the impacts of sexism and racism from an African-American and diverse cultural perspective in order to gain an understanding of their similarities, differences, and possible solutions. These endeavors will help America build a nation of solidarity, and perhaps human liberation.

Moreover, the research literature review indicates there is a major social shift that has affected the entry of women into the job market. Evidently, an increasingly large number of women also are pursuing occupations as attorneys, physicians, ordained ministers, and other traditionally male dominated occupations. The feminist, womanist, Women's Movement, as well as the Magna Carta bill and other preambles that recognize and support the rights of women are largely responsible for the major shift in attitudes about gender roles. Research strongly implies that women who are embracing this "new perspective" are usually college or seminary educated.⁸⁵ This research also indicates that women who enter "traditionally male clergy occupations" are usually confronted with at least three obvious barriers that ultimately contribute to sexism in the sacred world: (1) The appointment process, (2) Slow ordination process or denial, and (3) woman's inhumanity to woman which is women's opposition to female leadership. Here again, the *Study of Clergy in the Virginia Annual Conference* indicates that women were more likely to be associate pastors, whereas men were more likely to be the sole or senior pastor. Also, women were more likely appointed to rural parishes whereas men were more likely appointed to urban parishes—consequently church size and location impacts

⁸⁵ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 75-79.

clergy salaries.⁸⁶ For instance, research also indicates that the following factors influence elder salaries: (1) Elders who work in small towns or rural areas earn less, (2) Elders serving as senior pastors earn higher salaries, (3) Elders with more years experience earn higher salaries, and (4) Elders with larger churches earn higher salaries.⁸⁷ Other research indicates that the number of women in ministry has consistently increased over the past twenty years; however, obvious male/female disparities continue to exist. This “reality” reflects an over saturated job market as well as speculation that women may not be well accepted as senior pastors.⁸⁸

Moreover, slow ordination process or denial also is a barrier that contributes to religious sexism. Women’s desire to fulfill their call to ministry opened ordination doors to leadership positions, such as, Bishop, Pastor, Elder, Presiding Elder, District Superintendent, and Chaplain. Some women’s disapproval of male language in reference to God, and disapproval of hierarchical forms of church policy is only a couple of reasons why social transformation is taking place under female leadership. Although women’s ordination is acceptable in Methodism, workplace male/female disparities are obvious in terms of securing larger parishes and subsequent moves within ministry.⁸⁹ In essence, the researchers concluded that the impact of sexism on women in the workplace and

⁸⁶ Judith Bradford and Brenda Biler Hannold, *Study of Clergy in the Virginia Annual Conference* (Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University, 1999); [database on-line]; accessed on 25 October 2005, <http://www.vaumc.org/LDI/WomenStudy.html>, 5-21

⁸⁷ Ibid., 20-24.

⁸⁸ Carroll W. Jackson. *Women of the Cloth. A New Opportunity for the churches* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 112-115.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 146-202.

African-American women ministers in Methodism is a major problem in the United States of America.

CHAPTER III

CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

This chapter examines the disparities women encounter when pursuing positions as pastors, preachers, and/or full ordination rights within the United Methodist Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church between 1980 and 2000. Since the 1980s, women in the United States of America have become clergy in increasing numbers. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, approximately 10 percent of clergy were female. Today, 13 percent of all ordained elders are minority women in pastoral ministry.¹ By the year 2000, over 30 percent of students enrolled in the Association of Theological Schools were females.² All previously stated percentages are low when compared to other professionals, such as, government employees. Currently women occupy many positions in the state and federal government. For instance, women represent 20.4 percent of state legislators, eleven are lieutenant governors, three are governors, eight are attorney generals, nineteen are state treasurers, thirteen are secretaries of state, six women are in the senate, and forty-eight

¹ *Goals and Recommendations for Full Participation of All Women* [on-line] <http://www.gcsrw.org/news/gc2000/legislation5.html>, 3, [accessed on 23 June 2005].

² *Ibid.*, 4.

are in the House of Representatives.³ The number of African-American women in office has increased from 131 in 1970 to 1,950 in 1990.⁴ Disparities in terms of income earned are shared by both women in the sacred and secular arena (i.e., clergywomen with the same number of year's experience as clergymen, who share the same appointments, make nine percent less than their male colleagues).

In 1992, women earned seventy-one percent of every dollar paid to men. The earned income range was from sixty-four cents for working-class women to seventy-seven cents for women with doctorate degrees. Black women earned sixty-five cents while Latinos earned fifty-four cents.⁵ Nevertheless, women are beginning to occupy leadership positions, such as, preachers and pastors at unprecedented rates.

Many studies confirm that issues, such as, sexism are directly or indirectly related to the subordination of women in the church. *The United Methodist Clergywomen Retention Study*, which was conducted by the Anna Howard Shaw Center of the Boston University School of Theology, studied written and interviewed responses of almost 1,400 United Methodist clergywomen. The study revealed that United Methodist clergywomen leave local church ministry at a 10 percent rate faster than clergymen. The study cites four major reasons why: (1) Lack of support, (2) Lack of integrity, (3) Rejection from parishioners and the congregation, and (4) The persistent conflict of family and pastoral responsibilities. Various groups are identified as being responsible

³ Gail Buchwalter King, *Fact Book on Theological Education 1994* (Pittsburgh: Association of Theological Schools, 1994), 79-85.

⁴ Gail Buchwalter King, *Fact Book on Theological Education 1994* (Pittsburgh: Association of Theological Schools, 1994), 79.

⁵ *Goals and Recommendations for Full Participation of All Women* [on-line], <http://www.gcsrw.org/news/gc2000/legislation5.html>, 3, [accessed on 23 June 2005].

for addressing these concerns: conference leaders, congregations, appointment systems, and clergywomen themselves.⁶ *The Study of Clergy in the Virginia Annual Conference* was created to research probable disproportional rates of attrition among clergywomen in the Conference compared to clergymen in the conference. The researchers received data about the appointment status of clergy who entered between 1981 and 1996. In 1997, after researchers conducted twenty-one personal interviews with clergywomen and nine interviews with clergymen, consistent results revealed that gender-based differences exist and are related to systematic characteristics of personal practices and Conference organization. This fifteen-year study revealed that the number of female clergy in the Virginia Conference for appointment is disproportionately high when compared to male clergy.⁷

Many women in the study consistently referred to the opportunity in the Virginia Conference. Additionally, many clergywomen also felt that favorable change is evolving. On the contrary, more than one-third of the women interviewed struggled to accept their call into ministry because they either had no clergy experience or they could not visualize having a pulpit ministry. Fewer than half of the clergymen and less than one-third of the clergywomen who were interviewed believed their clergy colleagues provided ministry support. Gender differences in terms of appointment types were obviously different—men were more likely than women to be senior pastors at station

⁶ G. T. Hunt, *United Methodist Church's Approval To Ordained Ministry*, Anna Howard Shaw Center of Boston University Theology School, 1999, <http://www.gthunt.com/umcstat1.html>, 1-3; [accessed 25 October 2005].

⁷ Judith Bradford and Brenda Biler Honnold, *Study of Clergy in the Virginia Annual Conference*, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1999, [http://www.vaumc.org/LDI/Women Study.html](http://www.vaumc.org/LDI/Women%20Study.html), 5; [accessed 25 October 2005].

churches. On the other hand, women were more likely to be associate pastors. A higher percentage of women than men described the location of their church setting as suburban (35 percent women, compared to 25 percent men), and a higher percentage of men described their church location as urban (19 percent of men and 13 percent of women).⁸

Likewise, the disparities in wages are not limited to the secular population. A study of the Virginia Conference offers some startling variable results which more than likely are similar to other conferences. For example, the average salary for clergymen is significantly higher than for clergywomen. The average salary for clergymen in the Virginia Conference fell within the \$40,000 to 59,999 range, and for clergywomen within the \$30,000 to \$39,999 range. Church membership, church charge, and gender bias have a significant effect upon clergy salary. Research indicates that 48 percent of the variance in elder's salaries is based on: (1) Sex of the individual, (2) Number of years as an elder, (3) Current ministry in a rural area or small town, (4) Whether an individual is serving a station church as a full-time pastor, and (5) Church membership and/or charge at the end of 1997. Factors influencing Elders' salaries are as follows: (1) Elders who work in small towns or rural areas earn less, (2) Those who have been Elders longer earn higher salaries, (3) Elders serving as senior pastors earn higher salaries, and (4) Elders with larger churches earn higher salaries—this factor is the most significant of them all. Variables associated with larger salaries are: larger church membership, number of years as an Elder, and whether an individual is serving a station church as senior pastor.

⁸ Ibid., 18-21.

Variables associated with lower salaries are: gender, clergy as a spouse, and a ministry in a small or rural area.⁹

Clergywomen in the Virginia Conference are more likely than clergymen to pursue additional degrees. Educational statistics indicate that 13 percent of clergy have earned an associate degree, 85 percent a bachelor's degree and 75 percent a Master of Divinity degree. Women were more likely to have earned a Master of Divinity degree (77.5 percent had done so, compared with 71.8 percent of clergymen). More men than women had earned an Associate degree, Master of Theology degree, and Doctor of Ministry degree. Two decades ago, women were more likely than men to have a Master's of Religious Education because it was more suitable for the positions (such as missionary) that were made available to them.¹⁰

Factors influencing the decision to pursue ordination or licensing are: a non-specific call into ministry, a call to preach, and/or a call into local ministry. Both men and women identified a call to local church ministry as the most influential reason for seeking ordination. However, women are more likely than men to enter the Conference seeking non-traditional roles usually denied to women, whereas men are more likely than women to pursue traditional roles. Nonetheless, women are less satisfied with their current appointments than are men. Approximately 54 percent of the male clergy strongly agreed that their spiritual gifts are fully utilized—only 44 percent of female

⁹ Ibid., 20-24.

¹⁰ Ibid., 24, Internet, [accessed 25 October 2003].

clergy concurred. Overall, men are significantly more likely than women to feel their spiritual gifts are fully utilized.¹¹

Appointments to local congregations are also a focus of the Virginia Annual Conference Survey. During the time of this study 85 percent of clergy were serving local congregations—87 percent men and 80 percent women. Five percent of the clergy were not currently serving a local congregation, but had plans of doing so; and eight percent were not serving a local congregation, and had no future plans of doing so. Less than two percent of the clergy were not serving local congregations; instead two had appointments to attend school, and eleven stated they had never been appointed to a local congregation. Men were more likely to leave an appointment due to spousal obligations or unfulfilled expectations in church ministry. Women contemplated leaving an appointment because of the appointment process, lack of support from the church, and lack of opportunity to utilize their spiritual gifts.¹²

According to the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration 2000 statistics, the United Methodist Church denomination has 7,803 clergywomen serving in some capacity. Of that number 4,460 are elders in full connection. The UMC denomination has 44,118 clergy leading congregations or serving in ministries beyond the church. According to Dr. Gregg Hill, Director of Endorsement for the United Methodist Church Endorsing Agency, the UMC has a total of 200 female

¹¹ Ibid., 25-27; Internet [accessed 25 October 2003].

¹² Ibid., 30-31; Internet [accessed 25 October 2003].

Chaplains—twenty are African-Americans.¹³ There are 29,203 clergymen in full connection as well. The United Methodist Church also has thirteen women bishops—eleven active and two retired.¹⁴

The *United Methodist Church Facts and Figures*, December 31, 2001, reports that the United Methodist Church membership is 8,296,836. The UMC also has 904 consecrated diaconal ministers, 35,469 local churches, 26,236 pastoral charges, 519 districts, 64 conferences, 50 Episcopal areas, 5 jurisdictions, 834,658 United Methodist women members, and 240,967 men members.¹⁵ According to the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2003*, the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2000 statistics report, the AME denomination has an inclusive membership of 2,500,000, approximately 6,200 churches, 3,231 pastors serving parishes and a total number of 3,537 clergy.¹⁶ According to Dr. Dennis C. Dickerson, the African Methodist Episcopal Church historiographer, AME currently has approximately 2,000 clergywomen, in which 400 are pastors, 5 are Chaplains, and twelve are professors.¹⁷

According to the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2001*, the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church 2001 statistics report, the CME

¹³ Dr. Gregg Hill of United Methodist Endorsing Agency, interview by author, via telephone, Atlanta, 02 December 2003.

¹⁴ *United Methodist News Service Backgrounder on Clergywomen*; 2001 <http://www.umns.umc.org/backgrounder/clergywomen.html>. 1-2, [accessed 14 October 2003].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶ Eileen W. Lindner, *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2002* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 347.

¹⁷ Dennis C. Dickerson of United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Nashville, interview by author, via telephone, Atlanta, 24 November 2003.

denomination has 784,114 church members, 3,069 congregations, 34 U.S. Annual Conferences (40 worldwide), nine Episcopal Districts (10 worldwide).¹⁸ In 1987, Versie P. Easter (an African-American woman) became the first woman to be appointed as an AME presiding elder.¹⁹ At this time there are no ordained CME female bishops. The CME statistical data reported was the only statistical data available during the time this research was conducted.

Women preached and were ordained in the United Methodist Church for many years, but they did not receive full clergy rights until 1956—women's rights were reaffirmed in 1968. Clergywomen in the African Methodist Episcopal Church were ordained in 1948, but did not receive full clergy rights until 1969. Clergywomen in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church were ordained in 1954, but did not receive full clergy rights until 1966.²⁰ Methodist clergy with full rights are ordained for a lifetime of service, word, and sacrament. All clergy are authorized to preach and teach the word of God, to order the life of the church for ministry and mission, and to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.²¹ Although the UMC, AME, and CME denominations have sanctioned ordination and full clergy rights for clergywomen, disparities still exist.

¹⁸ Eileen W. Linder, *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2000* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 349.

¹⁹ *Christian Methodist Episcopal Church* [on-line] available from <http://www.cme-church.org>. 01, [accessed 25 October 2003].

²⁰ Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrines: The Essentials* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 16-17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

According to the *Association of Theological Schools Fact Book 1999-2000*, the total number of students enrolled in all its member schools (that includes the UMC, AME, and CME students and institutions) in 1999 was approximately 70,432 full-time and part-time students. The largest student group reported is between the ages of 40-49, which represents 24.6 percent; the second largest student group is between the ages of 25-29 or 17.68 percent. Students 34 years old or younger constituted 39.61 percent, but more than 51.95 percent of the total enrollment is 35 years old or older. Enrollments reported as age unknown accounted for the remainder.²²

The total number of racial/ethnic students increased 19.7 percent between 1995 and 1999. The number of white students increased 4.2 percent over the same period while the number of students in all other racial/ethnic categories except one increased more during the same time period and are as follows: African-American students 20.3 percent, Asian students 16.2 percent, Native American students 9 percent, and Hispanic students 24.2 percent. Significant increases in the Master's of Divinity program were as follows: African-American women 51.5 percent, African-American men 15.1 percent, and Asian women 22.7 percent. During the fall of 1999, racial/ethnic students represented 20.2 percent of the total enrollment, and 30.5 percent enrollment in the Master of Divinity degree program.²³

Women in the Master of Divinity degree program at thirteen United Methodist seminaries make up over 50 percent of all Master of Divinity degree students – the

²² Louis Charles Willard, *Fact Book on Theological Education 1994* (Pittsburgh: Association of Theological Schools, 2000), 42.

²³ Ibid., 23.

statistics have lingered above 40 percent for more than ten years.²⁴ The number of women attending seminary for the Master of Divinity degree increased from 7,602 in 1995 to 9,106 in 1999. The Association of Theological Schools reports reveal that the number of men seeking the same degree increased slightly from 19,895 to 20,736 in 1999. The percentage of male Master of Divinity students declined from 72.4 percent to 69.5 percent, while women constituted 30.5 percent of all Master of Divinity students, up from 27.6 percent in 1995.²⁵

Statistics also reveal that the number of ordained women in the United Methodist denomination is less than 18 percent. The total number of women enrolled in all degree programs in the Association of Theological Schools between 1995-1999 increased 15.7 percent or 3,262. The number of men enrolled in all degree programs only increased 6.16 percent or 2,690 between 1995 and 1999. Overall, women now constitute 34.2 percent of the total enrollment—about a two percent increase since 1995, and yet, the number of ordained women is still very low.²⁶ Another study indicated that 53 percent of sixty-four of the women interviewed approved of women as pastors; however, 18.5 percent or twelve disapproved. Likewise, 842 or 50.8 percent of men approved of women becoming pastors. This recurring theme of women who disagree with women being pastors is evident in the church of God In Christ and some Baptist denominations. This survey data reflect a link between the educational level of clergy members and their attitudes toward

²⁴ *Goals and Recommendations for Full Participation of All Women* [on-line], <http://www.gcsrw.org/news/gc2000/legislation5.html>, 3, [accessed on 25 October 2003].

²⁵ Louis Charles Willard, *Fact Book on Theological Education 1999-2000* (Pittsburgh: Association of Theological Schools, 2000), 38-40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

women pastors. The data also suggest that clergy with college education are more likely to accept a woman pastor than women with less education. There also appears to be a link between denomination association and attitudes toward women pastors. The survey indicates that the Pentecostal (Church of God In Christ) and three Baptist denominations tended to be negative in their attitudes toward women as pastors. In contrast, AME, CME, and UMC's high approval rate strongly indicates that the Methodist denominations have a strong positive attitude towards accepting women as pastors.²⁷

A survey of (2,150 churches) the policies of the seven major African-American denominations toward women clergy sheds light and raise questions about contemporary attitudes of African-American clergy toward women becoming ministers. These data shows that only five percent of the clergy in the top seven African-American denominations are female. The study also indicates that 81.5 percent or 52 percent out of 64 of the women interviewed approved of women as pastors; however, 18.5 percent or 12 women disapproved. On the other hand, 50.8 percent or 842 of men approved of women becoming pastors.²⁸ This recurring theme of women who strongly disagree with women being pastors is prevalent in the church of God In Christ and some Baptist denominations.²⁹ The survey data show a link between the educational level of a clergy member and their attitudes toward women as pastors. For example, data show that 56.8 percent or 152 women without a high school diploma disapproved of women becoming

²⁷ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 289-291.

²⁸ Ibid., 289.

²⁹ Ibid., 291.

pastors, whereas 43.2 percent or 115 disapproved. In contrast, 66.8 percent or 423 of college educated clergy approved of women becoming pastors, while 33.2 percent or 211 disapproved.³⁰ Therefore, the data suggest that clergy with college education are more likely to accept a woman pastor than women with less education. There appears to be a link between denomination association and attitudes toward women as pastors. The survey indicated that the Pentecostal (Church of God In Christ) and three Baptist denominations tended to be negative in their attitudes toward women as pastors. On the contrary, the AME Zion denomination with a 94.2 percent approval rate, the CME denomination with a 92 percent approval rate, and the AME denomination with an 88 percent approval rate strongly indicate that the Methodist denominations have a strong positive attitude towards accepting women as pastors.³¹ Moreover, the church of God In Christ allows women to become evangelists, but not ordained pastors. The few women who become pastors are usually widowed before succeeding their deceased husbands. In addition, African-American denominations make a distinction between preachers and pastors—the pastor is the leader of the church just as a president is the leader of a company. Preachers are those who may or may not have the privilege of ordination or denominational recognition as a pastor. However, ordained preachers may or may not be pastors as well. Still, some Baptist churches allow women to exhort or preach, yet deny them the privilege of carrying out rituals of communion and baptism. Nonetheless, 51.1

³⁰ Ibid., 290-291.

³¹ Ibid., 291.

percent of the African-American clergy surveyed in this study approved of women as pastors.³²

The data in this survey also indicate that African-American women ministers increased pursuit of pastoral and preaching positions within the top seven mainstream denominations (AME, CME, AME Zion, Church of God in Christ, National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., National Missionary Baptist Convention of America, and Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.) is met with resistance.³³ Furthermore, this research cites three reasons why women are pursuing ministerial profession through full ordination: (1) The postwar proliferation of Christian churches during the 1950s in America that led to an increasing need for professional clergy, (2) The Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement of the 1960s which ignited an urgency for African-American leadership, and (3) The feminist movement of the 1970s ignited a desire and pursuit for equality in all leadership positions in the sacred and secular arena.³⁴

According to the Carpenter's Study mentioned in *The Black Church in the African-American Experience*, African-American women ministers turned to white denominations because of the better opportunity for employment and ordination. Major white denominations like the Episcopalians, United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Lutherans, and Presbyterians moved swiftly in the past twenty years to make all positions of ministry accessible to women.³⁵ It appears that white denominations are

³² Ibid., 293-297.

³³ Ibid., 296.

³⁴ Ibid., 297-298.

³⁵ Ibid., 298.

more tolerant of women as pastors and preachers. Yet, the advancement of women into the office of Bishop and other positions of power has been stifled. For instance, most newly appointed clergywomen are assigned a small or rural church which usually means lower salaries. Also, few clergywomen are appointed large established churches, which oftentimes yield larger salaries.³⁶ In essence, Methodist denominations have been officially ordaining women as pastors and preachers for many decades. Still, larger churches and positions as Bishop are being appointed primarily to clergymen. Here again, the survey indicates that 51.1 percent of African-American clergy nationwide approved of women as pastors and preachers, but persistently negative attitudes continue to linger. As a result, Bible College and seminary educated and/or trained women are joining predominately white denominations that have shown progressive attitudes towards sexuality issues. Perhaps, racism in the lives of African-Americans is so prevalent that the challenges of sexism often receive less notoriety.

³⁶ Ibid., 299-300.

CHAPTER IV

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN MINISTERS IN METHODISM: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

This chapter documents the roles of African-American women ministers in Methodism during the twentieth century. First, the term black church will be defined, and a historical synopsis provided. Next, a brief history of the United Methodist Church as well as the history of its African-American women ministers will be discussed. Then an historical overview of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and its women ministers will be conveyed. In addition, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church history and its women ministers will be notated. Finally, womanist theological perspectives, clergymen attitudes toward clergywomen, African-American women ministers' contribution in the field of religious education, a general overview of the ordination of women, as well as what appears to be the black church's future agenda will be included in this chapter.

The black church came into existence as a response to slavery, segregation, and white racism. The term black church refers to a collective name describing African-American Christian denominations and churches. These religious institutions are a creation of free black slaves who desired to worship "freely."¹ Further, during the Great Depression, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and other challenging times

¹ Norman Jean Lutz., *The History of the Black Church* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001), 11-12.

throughout history, the black church has proven to be an institution that has helped sustain the African-American community.² At the same time, African-Americans have fought for racial equality outside and inside the sacred arena. Yet, sexual inequality within the African-American race has been ignored or taken too lightly. The black church, AME, AMEZ, and the CME, have a history of predominately female membership, still predominately male leadership persists.³

In contrast, African culture allowed women to serve in leadership roles, such as queens, midwives, and herbalists. The American slave culture contributed to the changes in African-American gender relations. The practice of reserving leadership roles of pastor and preachers for males only is primarily a European church concept. In addition, the church was the only institution where African-American men could occupy positions of authority—a privilege they often refused to share with women. Similarly, some women opposed female leadership in the church. Nonetheless, Sojourner Truth and other African-American women became notable leaders in the abolitionist movement. Also, as early as the 1700s women petitioned for ordination rights; without avail some women established their own independent churches. However, others accepted roles as evangelists, deaconesses, missionaries, and Sunday school teachers. African-American women's persistence and determination to gain full ordination rights will result in victory for all women within Methodism, but the reality of sexist attitudes has created another

² Ibid., 51-56.

³ Ibid., 67-68.

battle—inequalities for clergywomen.⁴ On the other hand, we celebrate the accomplishments and contributions women ministers have made thus far.

Previously, during the nineteenth century, African-American women such as, Jarena Lee and Amanda Berry Smith, played key roles in the Methodist Church. African-American women emerged as preachers in the Methodist tradition long before their white sisters did, which is evidenced by historical accounts of the Second Great Awakening. A religious revival (also referred to as a religious revolution) contributed to the total number of American churches doubling between 1770 and 1790, and the growth of the Independent Black Church Movement. Moreover, America became a notable Christian nation as its population expressed their religious convictions publicly. This social/religious change shattered traditional structures of authority—thus providing religious opportunities for the illiterates and educated alike. The Methodist and Baptist denominations encouraged public exhortation and prayer by women. Many African-Americans were given permission to preach and exhort. By the 1800s, approximately three American Methodist denominations were African-American denominations.⁵ More than ever before in United States history, whites and African-Americans openly expressed themselves through prayer, exhortation, preaching, singing, prophecies, dreams, and visions that far exceeded public religious expressions during the colonial period. Many people congregated whenever and wherever they could to wash each others feet, show affections of agape love, and spread the gospel—these religious

⁴ Ibid., 68-70

⁵ Harry S. Stout and D.G. Hunt, *New Directions In American Religious History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 185-189.

encounters became tenets of proliferations known as the Second Great Awakening. This time period also marked the beginning of the formation of independent African-American congregations.⁶

Jarena Lee, neither licensed nor ordained, began her ministerial career during the Second Great Awakening. Jarena Lee was born February 11, 1783 at Cape May, New Jersey.⁷ Approximately, five years after Lee's conversion to Christianity a voice said to her "Go preach the gospel." Two days later she told Rev. Richard Allen that she felt called to preach. He suggested she consider exhortation or holding prayer meetings. But as to preach, he said, "The Methodist discipline did not call women preachers."⁸ Jarena Lee was encouraged to do more as many thoughts entered her mind:

O how careful ought we to be, lest through our by-laws of church, government, and discipline, we bring into disrepute even the word of life. For as seemingly as it may appear now days for a woman to preach, it should be remembered that nothing is impossible with God. And why should it be thought impossible, heterodox, or improper, for a woman as well as the man.

If a man may preach, because the Savior died for him, why not the woman? Seeing he died for her too. Is he not a whole Savior, instead of a half one as those who hold it wrong for a woman to preach, would seem to make it appear?

Did not Mary first preach the risen Savior, and is not the doctrine of the resurrection the very climax of Christianity—hangs not all our hope on this, as argued by St. Paul? Then did not Mary, a woman preach the gospel? For she preached the resurrection of the crucified Son of God. But some will say that Mary did not expound the Scripture, therefore, she did not preach, in the proper sense of the term. To this I reply, it may be that the term preach, in those primitive times, did not mean exactly what it is now made to mean. Perhaps it was a great deal simpler then, than it is

⁶ Ibid., 189-198.

⁷ William L. Andrews, *Sisters of the Spirit: Three Black Women's Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century* (United States of America: Indiana University Press, 1986), 27-28.

⁸ Ibid., 36.

now: if it were not, the unlearned fisherman could not have preached the gospel at all, as they had no learning.⁹

Lee's argument is for the right of women to preach. She argued the Savior died for women as well as for men. The crucifixion was for universal salvation, not just for male salvation; therefore, Christ died, no less for the woman as for the man. Lee perceives that there is an ontological issue at stake. If Christ were a Savior of all, then it is humanity—the wholeness—of Christ, which is significant. Lee argues that the significance of Christ is not his maleness, but his humanity. The most significant events of Christ were his life, his ministry, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. God becomes not only in the man Jesus, for he was crucified, but in the lives of those who will accept the challenges of the risen Savior of the Christ. For Lee, this meant that women could preach.

Amanda Berry Smith (1837 – 1915) was the most well known African-American female evangelist during the nineteenth century in the United States.¹⁰ Smith's call to preach came as vividly in a vision as had her experiences of conversion and sanctification, which was a confirmation of the path on which God had placed her.¹¹ Two years later, as Smith sat in the Fleet Street African Methodist Episcopal Church in Brooklyn she experienced a supernatural encounter, which she describes as "My Last Call," she states:

⁹ Ibid., 36-38.

¹⁰ Jualynne E. Dodson, *An Autobiography: The Story of the Lord's Dealings with Mrs. Amanda Smith the Colored Evangelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 17-20.

¹¹ Ibid., 57-61.

I was sitting with eyes closed in silent prayer to God, and after I had seemed to see a beautiful star, and as I looked at it, it seemed to form into the shape of a large white tulip; and I said, "Lord, is that what you want me to see? If so, what else?" And then I leaned back and closed my eyes. Just then I saw a large letter "G." and I said: "Lord, do you want me to read in Genesis, or in Galatians? Lord what does this mean?"

Just then I saw the letter "O." I said, why, that means go, "And I said, what else?" And a voice distinctly said to me "Go preach." The voice was so audible that it frightened me for a moment, and I said, "Oh, Lord, is that what you want me to come here for? Why did you not tell me when I was at home, and when I was on my knees praying? But his paths are known in the mighty deep, and his ways are past finding out." On Monday morning, about four o'clock, I think, I was awakened by the presentation of a beautiful, white cross—white as the driven snow . . . It was as cold as marble. It was laid just on my forehead and on my breast. It seemed very heavy, to press me down. The weight and the coldness of it were what woke me; and as I woke I said: Lord, I know what it is. It is a cross. I arose and got on my knees, and while I was praying these words came to me: "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And I said, Lord help me and I will.¹²

For Amanda Berry Smith, conversion was primarily a matter of the will: giving up selfish desires and taking on the purposes that God had for her life. She surrendered her life to a career of ministry during a time when female preachers were not fully acknowledged, Smith comments:

. . . The most I did was among my own people. There were then but few of our ministers that were favorable to women preaching or taking any part, I mean in a public way; but thank God, there always were a few men that dared to stand by woman's liberty in this, if God called her . . . We have women deaconesses, and leaders, and women in all departments of church work.¹³

As described above, women are restricted to positions of "limited power" within the church. Women's battle with sexism is not a new phenomenon—it has indeed existed for centuries. Jarena Lee and Amanda Berry Smith are excellent examples of what could

¹² Ibid., 145-148.

¹³ Ibid., 132.

happen when one decides to venture into “forbidden terrains.” They are indeed pioneers of the women’s movement. Although some churches are ordaining women, some women are yet restricted from all areas of ministerial office, such as Bishop. The office of a Bishop is the highest ranking office, and it brings with it the most prestige, highest salary, and decision-making power above all other ministerial offices of the church. Perhaps, some men and women’s feelings of inferiority and insecurity are two of the real reasons why the position of Bishop is reserved for men only.

The autobiographical accounts and voices of women in this research will reflect how women ministers perceive and respond to the changes that are taking place in the church. In fact, the Methodist Church experienced many divisions due to slavery and racial tension which has engulfed the church from the beginning. Perhaps the rape and abuse of African-American women during slavery has led to a devaluation of African-American women. Seemingly, stereotypical perceptions of African-American women as immoral and promiscuous have helped shape the social status of all African-American women. Some scholars would argue that today’s devaluation of black womanhood is simply a perpetuation of sexual exploitation that has its roots in the American slave system.¹⁴ Today, sexism is the driving force behind lingering tensions between male and female ministers.

¹⁴ Bell Hooks, *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Woman and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 51-72.

African-American Women Ministers in the United Methodist Church

The history of African-American Women ministers in Methodism begins with the history of the United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church was founded by John Wesley during the early eighteenth century. John Wesley and several other Oxford University students created the United Societies—a group who was committed to prayer, bible teaching, and assisting the less fortunate. The members of the United Societies became known as the Methodists and eventually spread to the North American colonies during the 1760s. In 1773, Francis Asbury and others held the first conference which led to the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore in 1784, then other states. In 1828, racial tension contributed to a division that led to the formation of the Methodist Protestant Church. Approximately sixteen years later another split occurred between the northern Methodist Episcopal Churches due to unresolved disagreements on racial issues. This led to the southern churches renaming themselves the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Earlier in the late eighteenth century, Richard Allen and a group of African-Americans separated and founded the African-American Episcopal Church. In 1821, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was created.¹⁵

In addition around 1789, German speaking members broke away from the Methodist Church and established the Brethren in Christ Church—its bishop was Philip Williams Otterbein. On a different note, Jacob Albright founded the Evangelical Church around 1803; however, this same group adopted the name the Evangelical Association in

¹⁵ Grant S. Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 1-36.

1816. Then in 1891, some of their members separated and formed the United Evangelical Church. About thirty-one years later the two groups reunited and renamed themselves the Evangelical Church.¹⁶ After the Civil War, many African-Americans separated and started the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (now known as the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church). Other divisions took place and led to the development of additional denominations: the Republican Methodists, the Congregational Methodists, the Bible Protestant Church, the Southern Methodists, the Evangelical Methodists, as well as the Methodist Protestant Church during the 1920s.¹⁷

The early twentieth century brought with it a significant increase in Methodist Church membership and reconciliation. In addition, the Evangelical United Brethren Church resulted from a union consummated in 1946 of the church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church which was formed in 1921. Further, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South combined to form the Methodist Church in 1939.¹⁸ Then in 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church united forming the second largest Protestant denomination in America—The United Methodist Church.¹⁹

The waves of changes within Christendom also impacted the roles of women within Methodism. African-American women's pursuit of leadership roles within Methodism led to many church amendments and historical accounts during the twentieth

¹⁶ Ibid., 221-234.

¹⁷ Ibid., 38-49.

¹⁸ Ibid., 103-116.

¹⁹ Ibid., 286-296.

century. Significant changes such as the granting of licenses for women who wanted to be local preachers by the General Conference during 1920 opened doors to female faces in positions previously reserved for men only. The same year, Mary E. Jones was granted a preacher's license. In fact, the first African-American woman (Laura J. Lange) to be ordained in any African-American Conference was ordained a local deacon in 1926 and a local elder in 1936.²⁰ However, the General Conference did not grant full clergy rights to women until 1956. Salle A. Crenshaw was the first African-American woman to be ordained an elder and accepted into full connection in an Annual Conference. Emma P. H. Burrell was the second African-American woman to receive the title of elder and conference membership in 1959. In addition, many other women were also ordained elders and admitted into full connection in Annual Conferences (i.e. Leotine Turpeau Current Kelly was elected the first African-American female bishop in the United Methodist Church).²¹

The year 1989 marked the beginning of the appointment of African-American women to district superintendent positions: Charlotte H. Nichols was assigned to the Peninsula Conference and Mary Brown Oliver was appointed to the Washington Central District of the Baltimore Conference. Furthermore, between 1974 and 1984 the average number of African-American superintendents averaged around twenty-two annually.²² Before 1990, around 200 (9 percent) of all clergy women in the UMC denomination were African-Americans. Also, there were less than twenty-four fully ordained African-

²⁰ Ibid., 53.

²¹ Ibid., 154-155.

²² Ibid., 217-219.

American women in the traveling ministry before 1968. In fact, most of these clergywomen served small stations or circuit charges. In addition, their training for ministry was primarily received from the Ministerial Course of Study School. Moreover, less than four of these clergywomen had either attended or graduated from a theological seminary, and around 75 percent had engaged in pastoral ministry. Women who do not serve as pastors engage in special assignments, such as seminary instructors, professors of religion, campus ministry, missionaries, chaplains, as well as other special assignments. Again, one of the most dramatic progressions toward inclusiveness in the UMC was the appointment of the African-American women pastors to the district superintendence: Charlotte Ann Nichols, Mary Brown Oliver, and Joethel J. Cooper.²³

In 1926, Laura Lange was the first African-American woman ordained a deacon by a bishop in the Methodist Church. In 1934, Ethel Payne was the first African-American woman to graduate from Garnett Biblical Institute. Grace Keen Thomas and Emma Lee Eulen completed the Local Pastors Study and received ordination in 1938. Elizabeth Cleveland, Laura J. Lange, Edna Lee, and Mary E. Smith were appointed as supply pastors.²⁴ Dr. Willa Beatrice Player became the first African-American female (in 1966) to become president (of any four-year college) Bennett College. Dr. Beatrice Player also was the first African-American woman to be ordained as an elder and admitted into full connection in an annual conference of the Methodist Church.²⁵ The

²³ Ibid., 258-259.

²⁴ Marilyn Magee Talbert, *The Past Matters: A Chronology of African Americans in the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Disciple Resources, 2005), 74-81.

²⁵ Ibid., 95-98.

first African-American clergywomen to be appointed as district superintendents were J. Jeanette Cooper (West Ohio Conference – North Central Jurisdiction) and Mary Brown Oliver (Baltimore Conference – Northeastern Jurisdiction) on June 15, 1992. By July 01, 1992 Charlotte Nicholas was appointed to the Peninsula Conference—Northeastern Jurisdiction. Then in 2000, three African-American clergywomen were elected bishops: The Reverend Beverly J. Shamana, The Reverend Violet Fisher, and The Reverend Linda Dobbins Lee. In fact, Beverly J. Shamana became the first African-American clergywoman to be elected to the episcopacy since the election of Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly in 1984.²⁶

Bishop Beverly Shamana is one of four siblings. She was born in Los Angeles, California in 1939. Reverend Shamana's father worked as a plastering contractor, and her mother worked part-time for the Department of Recreation in Pasadena, California. Bishop Shamana's family has strong connections to both the Baptist and Methodist Church. As a young child Beverly began playing the piano. She also knew at an early age that she wanted to be a minister and concert pianist. After graduating from high school Beverly attended Pasadena City College for two years—where she focused on a choral music major. Shortly thereafter, Beverly graduated from Occidental College and began her teaching career. In 1969, she married and then divorced ten years later. After teaching music for many years, Reverend Shamana received her call into ministry. At this time she was working as a layperson with the Ecumenical Institute of Chicago. Soon she began working as the Executive Director for the Annual Conference Commission on

²⁶ Judith Craig, *The Leading Women: Stories of the First Women Bishops of the UMC* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004). 16-17.

the Status and Role of Women. Finally, she obtained the highest honorary position within the church—the office of a bishop.²⁷

Violet Fisher was born in Maryland, one of seven siblings. Her father, William Fisher was a laborer and superintendent of Sunday school. Her mother, Virginia Fisher was a teacher, and eventually became superintendent choir president as well as church youth leader. At the age of fourteen, Violet realized she was called to ministry, and at the age of sixteen she shared her convictions with her pastor. Soon she began speaking in the church. During her twenty-two years of teaching, Violet also was an evangelist and later an ordained elder. Upon completing Bowie State Teachers College, Violet Fisher also completed work for a Master's degree at George Washington University. Fishers' desire to return to the Methodist Church eventually led her to retire from teaching and to enroll at Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia. In 1988, she was ordained a deacon and in 1990 she was ordained an elder of the UMC and was appointed to Sayers Memorial Church in Philadelphia. Today, Reverend Fisher is one of only four African-American clergywomen to become an ordained Bishop in the UMC.²⁸

Linda Lee was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1949. Her mother was a seamstress and her father was a plasterer. As a family, the Lees attended an African-American Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia where she attended school from kindergarten through eighth grade—then she and her family relocated to Cleveland, Ohio. Upon graduating from high school Linda Lee attended Adrian College for one semester in

²⁷ Ibid., 197-209.

²⁸ Grant S. Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 57-68.

1967.²⁹ After the first semester, Linda attended Ohio State University for one year and then enrolled at Temple—never completing her degree. Next, Lee got married while in Philadelphia and entered the music program at the University of Pittsburgh and graduated with a B.A. degree. Linda moved to Ohio because her husband accepted a job offer at the University of Dayton. After teaching children with disabilities, Linda realized she wanted to do something different. Her pursuit of a different vocation landed her at Union Theological Seminary, and today she is only one of a few African-American clergywomen bishops in the United Methodist Church denomination.³⁰

The Reverend David Dewitt Turpeau and Illa Marshall Turpeau are the parents of Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly (nick name Teenie).³¹ Reverend Turpeau and his wife Illa were pastoring at Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church when Leontine was born March 15, 1920—one of eight children.³² After graduating from Woodward High School in 1937, Leontine attended the University of Cincinnati, but shortly thereafter, she transferred to West Virginia State College in 1938. While attending college Leontine pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and joined the NAACP. West Virginia State University also is where Glouster Bryant Current and Leontine met and were engaged. The couple married on September 6, 1941 in Cincinnati—Glouster died in 1997.³³

²⁹ Judith Craig, *Leading Women: Stories of the First Women Bishops of the UMC* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 148-154.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 155-160.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

³² *Ibid.*, 24-26.

³³ Angela P. Current, *Breaking Barriers: An African American Family and the Methodist Story* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 46-58.

Leontine completed three years of the Ministerial Course of Study Program of the United Methodist Church through correspondence courses and the Wesley Course of Study School at Wesley Theological Seminary during the early 1970s. Leontine was ordained a deacon on June 21, 1972. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in 1976 and was ordained an elder on June 14, 1977. Leontine was appointed assistant general secretary for the section on evangelism in 1983. At the age of sixty-four she became the first African-American woman to be elected bishop of any mainline Protestant denomination in the world. Also, Leontine was the second woman to be elected bishop in the UMC. She received more than ten honorary doctorate degrees, and in October 2000 she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York.³⁴

African-American Women Ministers in the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is an offspring of the Methodist Church which was founded by John Wesley during the eighteenth century. Wesley, realizing the potential of church growth in America, ordained Dr. Thomas Coke and sent him to organize the Methodist Church in America. During the 1784 General Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, Richard Allen was present. Allen became a member and then an ordained elder and eventually a bishop of the Methodist movement. Hence, racial tension led to another division in the Methodist order and the formation of the AME

³⁴ Ibid., 88-120.

denomination (by Richard Allen and others) in 1816.³⁵ Further, when the AME Church was established in 1816, it had no official ministerial positions available for women. In fact, men held all official decision-making positions. Nevertheless, AME slowly altered its denominations' structure to include women in positions previously reserved for men only.³⁶ AME women began their ministerial inclusion process by forming organizations, such as The Daughters of Conference. This organization which began during the early nineteenth century helped establish a pattern for how women should collectively implement changes in the church. The Daughters of Conference is responsible for creating three positions for women within the AME Church: (1) stewardess, (2) female evangelist, and (3) deaconess.³⁷ In 1817, Jarena Lee was the "first" woman to preach in the AME Church. She began her endeavors as a leader of a predominately female praying and singing group, and later become an evangelist. Sarah E. Gorham (in 1888) became the first woman missionary of the AME Church assigned to a foreign field. In 1901, Anna Hall became the first African-American to graduate as deaconess of the AME denomination. Hall started a city mission which supervised field work of female students from Clark College. Five years later she went to Liberia where she remained for almost twenty-five years, working as an evangelist, nurse, teacher, and dentist.³⁸

³⁵ Jessey Carney Smith, *Black Firsts: 4000 Ground – Breaking and Pioneering Historical Events, Second Edition Revised and Expanded* (Detroit:Visible Ink, 2003), 537-540.

³⁶ Jualynne E. Dodson, *Endering Church: Women, Power, and the AME Church* (New York: Rowman and Letterfield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 2-4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 41

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 538-540.

As the world evolved and women began gaining access to leadership roles, the AME Church structure began to incorporate women leaders as well. The year 2000 marked the AME denomination's inclusion of women in all areas of ministry – including the office of bishop.³⁹ For instance, Vashti McKenzie became the first woman to become bishop of the AME denomination. Bishop McKenzie was born May 30, 1947 in Baltimore, Maryland. Her mother Ida McKenzie was a writer for a newspaper, and her father Edward worked for the federal government. Vashti's grandfather was the founder of an African-American newspaper, and her grandmother was a founding member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Vashti attended Morgan State University in Baltimore, but dropped out and married Stan McKenzie, a professional basketball player with the Baltimore Bullets. Meanwhile, Vashti held various jobs as a reporter for the Arizona Republic newspaper, a professional model, and a daytime disc jockey for a gospel music station. In addition, Vashti earned a degree in journalism from the University of Maryland—College Park. After joining the AME denomination, Vashti obtained a Master of Divinity degree from Howard University School of Divinity, and then her Doctorate degree from Union Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Furthermore, Vashti McKenzie was ordained a deacon in 1984 and was assigned a small congregation in Chesapeake City, Maryland. The following year, she was ordained into full-time ministry and was assigned a pastorate position at Oak Street African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1990, Vashti became minister of Payne Memorial AME Church. In addition, Reverend McKenzie served as Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's national Chaplain. Consequently, *Ebony Magazine* cited Vashti as one of the top

³⁹ Ibid., 41-42.

African-American preachers in America. In 2000, Reverend McKenzie became the first woman to become bishop of the AME denomination—she was assigned to the South African Jurisdiction.⁴⁰

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry was born on August 25, 1937 in Jackson, Mississippi. She earned her associate degree from J.P. Campbell College in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1977, Guidry graduated from Los Angeles Bible School and in 2004 she earned a Master of Theology degree from Fuller Theological Seminary. Guidry worked for the NAACP before she and her husband Cary Tyler moved to California where she worked for the Security Pacific Bank before entering ministry. For six years, Guidry served as pastor of the First AME church in Indio, California. In 1983, pastor Guidry was assigned to Walker Temple AME church in Los Angeles, California—designating her as the first African-American woman to be appointed to a major metropolitan church in the AME denomination. Reverend Guidry also became the first woman presiding elder in the Fifth Episcopal District. On July 5, 2004, Carolyn Tyler Guidry became the second woman elected bishop of the AME denomination. Bishop Guidry's first husband, Carey Tyler, died in 1988. Currently, Bishop Guidry and her second husband, Don, live in Los Angeles, California. The couple has six children and twelve grandchildren.⁴¹

In July 2004, Sarah Frances Davis became the third woman to be elected bishop in the AME denomination—she was assigned to the 18th Episcopal District which covers Lesotho Botswana, Swaziland, and Mozambique, South Africa. Prior to her election to

⁴⁰ Nathan Aaseng, *A to Z African Americans: African American Religious Leaders* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2003), 156-158.

⁴¹ *Religion Makers [on-line]*, <http://www.thehistorymakers.com>, [accessed 09 June 2005].

the office of bishop, Reverend Davis served as pastor of Bethel AME Church in San Antonio, Texas for seven years. In addition, Bishop Davis became the first woman in the Connectional AME Church to be elected chair of a Board of Examiners division—a board that recommends and examines candidates for ministry in the AME Church. In 2003, she was appointed Dean of the Board of Examiners for the State of Texas. Bishop Sarah Davis earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology, a Master of Divinity degree from New York Pace University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of North Texas. Moreover, *Ebony Magazine* recognizes Bishop Davis as one of the fifty most intriguing persons of 2004. Today, Bishop Davis is married to Claytie Davis, Jr.; the couple has two sons.⁴²

African-American Women Ministers in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

The history of Christian Methodist Episcopal denomination women ministers begins with the establishment of the CME itself. The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (originally known as the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church) developed as a result of racial differences between whites and African-Americans within the Methodist denomination. The Methodist Episcopal Church South was an extension of Wesley's Methodism. However, some African-Americans converted to Christianity accepted the Methodist doctrine as is and chose to remain a part of it. In contrast, the emancipation of African Americans from slavery contributed to African-Americans' desire to establish and oversee their own denominations. This led formerly enslaved persons to establish

⁴² *Directory – Presiding African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishops*, <http://www.ame-church.com>, [accessed 23 June 2005].

independent organizations such as the CME. So, many African-American men united together in Jackson, Tennessee on December 16, 1870. During this same time period, this new organization adopted the Methodist Episcopal South's Book of Discipline and elected William H. Miles and Richard Vanderhorst as their bishops.⁴³

During the early 1930s, women's participation in ministry has been primarily limited to the Women's Judiciary Council. However, this women's organization prepared CME women for leadership in various areas of church roles. In 1966, the CME denomination granted women full ordination rights and access to the traveling ministry. In 1987, Versie P. Easter became the first woman to be elected Presiding Elder of the South Arkansas Conference.⁴⁴ In fact, since 1962 women elected delegates to the Annual Conference have greatly increased. Although women are gaining access to positions of authority, appointments to major churches are rare. Moreover, there is only one woman presiding elder and no women bishops in the CME denomination. Furthermore, occasional reference to women ministers as Sister or Reverend Sister is indeed an indication that sexist attitudes continue to exist within the CME denomination. Accordingly, a 1994 study of the women's movement in the CME Church claims that clergywomen suffer from ecclesiastical patriarchy—male dominance over women. In other words, women are subordinate to men and therefore denied equal access to decision-making positions.⁴⁵

⁴³ Othal Hawthorne Lakey, *The History of the CME Church, Revised* (Memphis: The Christian Methodist Publishing House, 1996), 131-133.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 660-662.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 662-663.

Hence, the women's movement in the CME denomination during the 1990s seemed promising for women interested in being elevated in ministry. Women made up a majority of lay delegates to the 1990 General Conference. *God In My Mama's House: The Women's Movement in the CME Church* cites sexism as one of the factors that impacted women's exclusion from Full Connection. Nonetheless, women's desire and persistence to pursue their ministerial calling increased as they filled unofficial chaplain roles for CME women's gatherings. According to Bishop Othal Hawthorne Lakey, women have gained ordination rights in the CME Church, including "improved" pastoral assignments to larger churches.⁴⁶ In any event, some people in the CME Church still have not come to terms with accepting women as their pastors. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons CME has yet to elect a woman to the office of bishop.

Womanist Theological Perspectives

In any case, African-American women's feelings of exclusion from the women's liberation movement led to the creation of womanist theology. Womanist theology is an emergent voice of African-American women in the United States, which employs Alice Walker's definition of womanism in her text *In Search Of Our Mother's Garden*. African-American women are calling into question their suppressed role in the black church, the community, the family, and society. Thus, the task of womanist theology is to learn from past and present experiences and to improve African-American's overall quality of life. Womanist theology associates with and disassociates itself from feminist theology. The point of departure for feminist theology is the oppression of women,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 180-183.

primarily white women, and the rejection of patriarchy. In addition, feminist theology's shortcoming is its lack of attention to the everyday realities of African-American women and other minority women. Therefore, womanist theology is not a universal theology and does not speak to the issues of all women. In a like fashion, too often feminist theology creates a paradigm over and against men; it is an oppositional theological discourse between females and males.⁴⁷

The challenges and triumphs associated with African-American women ministers' encounters with sexism in the church lie in a better understanding of womanist theology. During the 1980s, African-American women began constructing creative attempts at theological analysis and reflections that insist that the secular and sacred community address racism, classism, and sexism from a womanist theological perspective. Much of the debate concerning African-American women and the rise of the womanist theological movement will be extracted from sources that provide insight into theology's relations to socio-political realities that exist because of male dominance within the church. For instance, Jacquelyn Grant, Stephanie Y. Mitchem, and Alice Walker agree that feminism and Christian feminism were developed by white women to focus exclusively on gender oppression. This type of theologizing identified male dominance as the center of gender oppression throughout all institutions of society. Many womanist theologians agree that this kind of focus only meets the needs of white women, thereby limiting or omitting relevance to African-American women whose experience of sexism is complicated by added challenges of racism. In addition, Grant, Mitchem, and Walker insist that

⁴⁷ Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Prose* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1989), 195-205.

womanist theology is only one form of liberation theology that demands a process of deconstructing theology from the lenses of Blacks in the Diaspora.⁴⁸ In essence, theology must include the presence and experiences of God in the lives of African-American women. The dynamics of race, class, and gender, in the lives of African-American women must be explored in order to understand how they impact and shape lives.

Primarily, feminist theology is a recently recognized type of theology that insists that traditional theology in Christianity (and many other religions) has been created almost exclusively by males—thus securing them as the dominant status quo in the sacred and perhaps the secular arenas. Women, until recently, have been excluded from ordained ministry. Theology has functioned in a way that has justified this exclusion and subordination of women. Feminist Christology's primary source is women's experiences in general and sexism in particular; however, gender oppression is the point of departure for feminist theologizing.

Unlike womanist theology with its emphasis on race, gender, and class, feminist theology addressed the oppression of women, usually white middle-class women. However, feminist theology does not deal with race and economics in the development of its theological discourse. Feminist theology is indeed important in the world of academia; consequently, one must consider its lack of attention to African-American women's realities. Therefore, it is rejected by some as universal women's theology because it does not speak to the issues of all women. Too often, feminist theology is an oppositional theological discourse between male and females. In contrast, womanist

⁴⁸ Stephanie Y. Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 25.

theology recognizes patriarchal systems as problematic for the entire black community. The black church has been and continues to be an institution that has helped black families survive many isms. Womanist and feminist theologies have their share of differences, yet they both concur on the necessity of engaging in theological conversation.

On a different note, black liberation theology places emphasis on race, whereas feminist theology addresses the oppression of women—primarily white women. Unfortunately, feminist theology does not deal with the categories of race and economics in the development of a theological discourse. Feminist theology has contributed to the slight improvement of women's lives; however, it excludes the realities and experiences of African-American women. Therefore, it is not a universal theology because it does not concern itself with the issues of all women. Likewise, feminist theology appears to be an oppositional movement of women against men. On the other hand, womanist theology recognizes patriarchal systems as problematic for all people, and includes African-American men in its war against injustices. Moreover, African-American women recognize that the African-American Church is an important institution which has assisted and continues to assist in the survival of the black family. At the same time, womanist theology calls into question the African-American Church's female leadership sexist notions. In addition, womanist theology concurs with feminist and black theology on the importance of the engagement of gender and race in theological perspectives. Unlike, feminist theology, womanist theology incorporates the gospel of Jesus Christ and

insists it is necessary for the survival and solidarity of all people regardless of race, class, or gender.

James H. Cone offers a reexamination of Christianity from the view of the oppressed African-American community. He argues that “white theology” conveys a negative attitude and/or action toward the liberation of an oppressed people- particularly African-American people. Therefore, Cone presents black theology which seeks to link the black condition in the light of God’s revelation in Christ, so that the African-American community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievement of the African-American community. The message of liberation is the revelation of God as revealed in the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. He insists that freedom is the gospel and Jesus is the liberator.⁴⁹ Certainly, black theology is connected to the Black Power Movement of the 1960s, an offspring of the Civil Rights Movement that had become intolerant of white oppression. Cone states that black power is a phrase that represents both African-American freedom and self-determination whereby African-American people can no longer view themselves as a race with no dignity, but as human beings worthy of equal rights. Black theology asserts that racism is found in American society, its denominations, and in the discipline of “white theology” thus affecting its nature and purpose. Also, Cone argues that the God of the Bible is God of the poor and those seeking freedom from oppression. Therefore, theology for African-Americans should validate the African-American struggle for freedom from oppression and for justice. James Cone also argues that God must be on the side of oppressed African-American

⁴⁹ James H. Cone, *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of A Black Theology of Liberation, 1968-1998* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 42-50.

people as he presents the concept of a black God. He attacks the “hypocrisy” of white theologians who preach love, yet do little or nothing to ease the oppression of African-Americans. Cone states that the sole purpose of the black God and black Jesus of which black theology speaks is to illuminate the African-American condition so that African-Americans can see that their liberation is the manifestation of God’s plan.

Cone insists that many problem areas concerning the church and women in ministry exist because our church’s value systems are built on the American capitalistic society and not the foundation of Jesus Christ. He also insists that the capitalists’ value system is partly responsible for women being denied the right to exercise power and to obtain full ordination rights appropriate with their church membership statistics.⁵⁰ In addition, some women are aware of economic, political, and social injustices that contribute to their subordination. It is obvious that African-American women’s ministry is limited. This is only one of the reasons women are demanding new roles in ministry. Cone argues that many black men, who have been conditioned to accept what white culture has defined as the woman’s place in the church and society, support the subordination of women. He continues by insisting that it is a contradiction for African-American men to protest against racism, and continue to oppress African-American women.⁵¹

Finally, James H. Cone argues that the time has come for African-American men to realize that the present status of African-American women is unacceptable. African-

⁵⁰ Ibid., 111-112.

⁵¹ Ibid., 117-118.

Americans can no longer support a subordinate ministry for women and claim to be advocates for the liberation of the oppressed. Cone continues with an appeal to African-Americans to deal honestly with male and female differences. Furthermore, the African-American community can no longer pretend that all is well, and that the problem of male-female relations is limited to the white community.⁵² Moreover, Christianity cannot continue to talk about the resurrection and continue to evade sexism and racism. Truly, Cone's views on women's liberation are the only views fully shared by the author of this text.

Historically, theology has justified the exclusion and subordination of women. In fact, while men have assumed normative roles as God's representatives; women have been defined as inferior. These types of beliefs reinforce women's social subordination by claiming, "This is the way God intended it to be." Feminist theology arises as a critical response to male-centered and anti-woman biases supported by traditional theologizing; therefore, feminist theology develops a three-stage approach. First, feminist theology rejects the traditional theological forms of oppressive theology, which are male-centered biases toward women. Instead, women began to analyze patriarchal patterns throughout history. This approach emphasizes feminist theologians who develop articles, books, and journals that reveal underlying assumptions and denounce them as inadequate. Second, feminist theologians search for traditions that provide positive symbols to uplift women. This quest for alternatives draws feminist theologians in different directions. Some feminist theologians conclude that traditional Christianity is incapable of affirming women as equal to men. Other feminists remain committed to

⁵² Ibid., 119-121.

their historically religious communities and believe that the intended message of Christianity or religion affirms women as equal to men, but the message has been distorted in patriarchal societies. A patriarchy is characterized by male domination as well as female submission and subordination. In such a society, women are considered weak and inferior, whereas men are considered strong and intelligent.⁵³ Third, most feminists aim to construct a theological system of reinterpreting symbols of divinity, origins of the world, and concepts of revelation, salvation, human nature, and the community in ways that affirm women's full participation in leadership roles within the church. In other words, all negative images must change to reflect reality. In closing, feminist theology seeks to develop a holistic theology embracing other religions as well as ethnic cultures.⁵⁴

In summation, African-American women continue to struggle against misrepresentation in a society that still undervalues who they are and who they are capable of being—the sacred world is no exception. Sexism is one of the major obstacles in which African-American women ministers cope. Unfortunately, the hierarchical system within Methodism is perpetuating this sexual bias. African-American women ministers, although highly qualified are still denied ordination or are often appointed to smaller churches that oftentimes guarantee lower salaries. Sexual bias within the system is overt. For instance, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church has no female bishops; however, the African Methodist Episcopal Church has three female Bishops: Vashti

⁵³ Pamela Dickey Young, *Feminist Theology / Christian Theology: In Search of Method* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 39-43.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 11-15.

McKenzie, Carolyn Tyler Guidry, and Sarah Frances Davis. After approximately forty years of full clergy rights, women ministers within Methodism are still confronted with sexism.

In contrast, womanist theology recognizes patriarchal systems as problematic for the entire African-American community as well as other minorities. Indeed, certain feminists tend to regard the institutional church as a patriarchal institution that is cruel to women, thus advising women to abandon the ecclesiastical mainstream. For many African-American women, the black church has been a central historical institution, which has generally assisted in the survival of the African-American family. In other words, womanist theology is a theory and a practice of inclusiveness, accenting gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ecology.⁵⁵ Since womanist theology exemplifies knowledge beyond the concerns of black (male) and (white) feminist theologies, it is therefore argued by the researcher, to be a holistic universal (women's) theology.

Perceptions of Clergymen Attitudes Toward Clergywomen

Some studies cite gender or sex disparities among African-American women and men as early as 1789.⁵⁶ Although African-American women and men worked together to end slavery and uplift the race, sexist ideologies continued to linger. For instance, preachers were almost always men, while women were prayer warriors, teachers, and organizers. However, there were a few African-American women ministers who

⁵⁵ Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Prose* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1989), 205-221.

⁵⁶ Johnetta Betsch-Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftal, *Gender Talk: The Struggle For Women's Equity in the African-American Community* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 2003), 108-114.

preached without full ordination rights. Nevertheless, men's opposition to women ministers was overt and relentless.⁵⁷ For instance, from the beginning of the AME denomination to the present, there has been expression of patriarchy. Even the founder of AME, Richard Allen was forced to face issues surrounding why women should or should not be licensed to preach, when his wife rejected the denomination's gender practices. Despite the cries of AME church women, it was not until 2000 that an African-American woman (Vashti McKenzie) was ordained Bishop.⁵⁸ Furthermore, during the nineteenth century the AME denomination would not ordain women as ministers; however, they could exhort and preach without a license. The office of steward was created in 1869, and the office of deaconess was created in 1900 for those women who insisted they were called to preach. Once the AME church officially⁵⁹ permitted the preaching license for women, they were licensed as evangelists only. Likewise, John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church was confronted with whether women should be permitted to preach. Wesley approved of women conducting prayer and spreading the gospel, but believed women should avoid the form of preaching. In other words, Wesley supported women exhorters, but prohibited women being recognized as preachers.⁶⁰ Women in the CME have made significant achievement in terms of gaining ordination rights. On the contrary, women have made minimum progress in attaining decision-making positions,

⁵⁷ Ibid., 108-119.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 109-110.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 113.

⁶⁰ Stephen Tomkins, *John Wesley: A Bibliography* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 2-15.

such as, presiding elder and bishop. Therefore, it is believed that the general attitude of male leadership (including CME's founding bishops: William Henry Miles and Richard H. Vanderhorst) in Methodism contributes to religious sexism.⁶¹

In conclusion, the contributions of African-American women ministers to religious institutions, organizations, as well as religious education are scarce and limited. In any event, the twentieth century gave birth to a new profession and a new area of study – religious education.⁶² This new profession / opportunity attracted both men and women alike, but it is women's contributions that are significant to this study. Olivia Peal Stokes was the first African-American woman to receive a doctor's degree in religious education. She also became the director of the department of religious education for the Massachusetts Council of Churches where she served until 1966. In addition, Dr. Stokes became an associate in the education department, and served as adjunct professor of religious education at New York University. The first African-American woman to serve as a field director of religious education for the Presbyterian Church was Emily V. Gibbes. Gibbes began this work in 1949, and eventually became associate general secretary for the National Council of Churches, and taught at New York Theological Seminary.⁶³ Moreover, religious education became known as a woman's profession at the church level, but was primarily dominated by males at the collegiate level. Further, religious education departments eagerly employed women, particularly

⁶¹ Othal Hawthorne Lakey, *The History Of The CME Church* (rev. ed.) (Memphis: The CME Publishing House, 1996), 660-663.

⁶² Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, *Women and Religion, Volume 3: 1900-1968* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986), 310-311.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 314.

during a time when full ordination rights were not extended to women. However, now that more women are pursuing ordination, fewer women are pursuing religious education degrees and careers. Likewise, women who pursue religious education do so with intentions of gaining ordination, and the title of minister of Christian Education.⁶⁴

To put it briefly, much has changed in the sacred arena. With the granting of full ordination rights, women are pursuing leadership roles within religious organizations and institutions on all levels. In fact, the Methodist denomination refused to license or ordain women until forced to do so by the reunion of Methodism in 1939. The 1939 Methodist Episcopal Church reunion yielded promises on the status of women: (1) The Methodist Episcopal Southern Churches were instructed to accept women as local preachers, (2) The Methodist Episcopal Northern Churches were instructed to retain women's ordination without conference membership, and (3) The Methodist Protestant Churches were instructed to begin ordaining women and to give conference membership. Furthermore, in 1956, only unmarried and widowed women were admitted to conference.⁶⁵ In 1968, the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelist United Brethren Church and abolished the central jurisdiction – becoming the United Methodist Church.⁶⁶ This union granted women full ecclesiastical privileges.

Again, many women have stepped out of their traditional work place roles into non-traditional leadership roles in both the secular and sacred worlds. Indeed, women are

⁶⁴ Ibid., 314-316.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 341.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 342.

entering ordained leadership roles in large numbers. However, this new leadership access is not a reality in every religious denomination, nor has it eliminated women's encounter(s) with sexism. Also, twentieth century women in America continue to experience domestic violence, ecological disasters, and resistance to change from men and women alike. A case in point, hierarchical structures are still common place in some sacred institutions.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, African-American women ministers increased representation in leadership roles in general is proof that chains of sexism are finally melting away.

Seemingly, the black church has a new agenda as it enters the twenty-first century. Some early African-American churches began as benevolent societies, and all expressed concern for widows, orphans, and the sick. Today, most African-American churches (black churches) continue to support benevolence, but it has become a lower priority. The black church benevolence fund is primarily concerned with providing assistance to those who are eligible to receive assistance. Included in the black church's initial agenda, was a concern for education and a desire to assure that African-Americans had access to at least an elementary education. However, after emancipation, the church's educational concern also included supporting and establishing secondary schools and colleges. For example, African-American Baptist organizations supported approximately eighty elementary schools and eighteen colleges. The African Methodist Episcopal denomination supported thirty-two secondary schools and colleges; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination supported eight educational institutions, and the

⁶⁷ Susan Hill Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place: A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 407-408.

Christian Methodist Episcopal denomination supported thirty educational institutions. Hence, African-Americans' access to education on every level lessened the dependency on sacred institutions.⁶⁸ Since then, the birth of the black church foreign missions has been top priority. Gradually, African-American denominations missionary services are declining as mission fields (primarily Africa and the Caribbean) gain assistance from their own countries.⁶⁹

It is imperative to note that there is no single institution that represents the black church. Moreover, African-American denominations have a tendency to identify and/or react to similar circumstances and concerns. Notwithstanding, African-American churches' absence of centralized bureaucracies has made it almost impossible to obtain accurate data, such as church budgets, church membership, number of pastors, and educated clergy.⁷⁰ The absence of centralized bureaucracies is due to church polity, church growth, African-American migration from rural areas to cities, lack of funds, as well as African-American religious institutions' failure to receive retirement pensions due to lack or absence of retirement funds. Meanwhile, some African-American churches are establishing day-care facilities, senior citizens centers, tutorial programs, and other publicly funded programs. Oftentimes, these programs help pay for church mortgages. According to some scholars, the most significant development among African-Americans

⁶⁸ Milton C. Sernett, *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 580-581.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 582.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 582-583.

who are not affiliated with religious organizations is that the black church is still critical to the survival of the African-American community.⁷¹

⁷¹ Ibid., 587-588.

CHAPTER V

BROKEN SILENCE: VOICES FROM WITHIN METHODISM: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter provides the results and discussions of the interviews with thirty African-American women ministers. The thirty presentations throughout this chapter come from clergywomen's expressed perceptions about their lives and ministry, and from the observations the researcher made during the interviews. The respondents were interviewed in their offices, at the Clark Atlanta Woodruff University Library conference rooms, and via telephone. The researcher selected only Methodist subjects; the women who reside in various places across the globe share some very valuable information that transcends denominational lines. In this chapter, the voices of African Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church clergywomen ring loudly and clearly as these women paint pictures of their lives and experiences as African-American women in ministry today. The remaining pages will reflect the sharing of struggles and triumphs, notions of ministry, human responsibility, and future expectations.

Voices From Within the African Methodist Episcopal Church

During the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, African-American women played key roles in the Methodist Church. Women such as (1) Bishop Sarah Frances Taylor Davis, (2) Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, (3) Presiding Elder Ella M. Samuels,

(4) The Reverend Angela D. Holiday Wright, (5) Dr. Alesia Scott-Ford, (6) Dr. Althea Brown, (7) Chaplain Joanne Bedford, (8) Dr. Berlinda A. Love, (9) Dr. LaVerne Whitehead Reed, and (10) Dr. Sheryl A. Matlock were only a few notable African Methodist Episcopal Church clergywomen. These African-American clergywomen, whom emerged as change agents, have indeed shed light on the realities experienced by a woman preacher.

For instance, Bishop Sarah Frances Taylor Davis is the Presiding Prelate of the 18th District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She has earned several degrees: a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics from the University of North Texas, a Master of Science degree from Pace University, a Master of Divinity degree from Houston Graduate School of Theology, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southern Methodist University, Perkins School of Theology. As a child, Bishop Taylor Davis dreamed of becoming a lawyer; however, she became a district manager for Southwestern Bell's Comptroller Department. As she continues to matriculate in her walk with Christ, she aspires to be a Godly leader who transforms the lives of those she serves. Bishop Taylor Davis looks forward to writing at least two books, retiring, and traveling. When asked "is it true that men and /or women oppose female leaders in the church—why or why not?" Bishop Taylor Davis replied:

I think that it is less true today that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church. I think it is less true today because women who have been given opportunities to hold previously male-dominated positions in the church have shown the church that they are excellent leaders. Women who have become pastors, presiding elders, and even bishops have demonstrated that the positions, neither the tasks nor the

challenges, are so foreign or difficult that their female gender gets in the way of their success.¹

Bishop Taylor Davis also was asked, “What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church?” She responded, “Any scripture which is non-inclusive can be used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church.” Bishop Taylor Davis is one of thirty Methodist clergywomen who was obliged to share her concern about issues surrounding clergywomen.²

In another example, Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry is the bishop of the 16th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Reverend Tyler Guidry graduated with an Associate of Arts degree in Business and Secretarial Sciences from JP Campbell College in Jackson, Mississippi. She also graduated with a four year certificate in Bible and Religious Studies from Los Angeles Bible School. In addition, Bishop Tyler Guidry studied Economics at Tougaloo College in Mississippi and earned a Master of Theology degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Before entering the ministry Bishop Tyler Guidry was employed by Security Pacific Bank in California, and worked as an Accountant for Tougaloo College. She plans to retire in 2012 and teach on the local church level. Bishop Tyler Guidry was asked, “Is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church?” She replied:

Yes, it is true, and I think, men because they see it as a man’s job, and some women see it as a man’s job, particularly those who are oriented to believe that there are certain things that man should do and women should

¹ Sarah Frances Taylor Davis (Presiding Prelate of 18th Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, written notes, Lesotho, South Africa, 04 November 2007.

² Ibid.

not do . . . I think when a woman is use to the authority figure being male it is hard to receive the same kind of authority from a female.³

Moreover, the researcher was eager to hear Bishop Tyler Guidry's response to the question—What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church?

She said:

Well, poor Paul has gotten a really, really bad rap! In the Corinthians passages where Paul talks about “let a woman be silent . . . let her ask her husband” has been taken out of context. . . Paul says that women should be quiet; and of course they take that totally out of context and without doing what we ordinarily would do. We should research the content, the context, and look at the time that the scripture was written to see exactly what was going on that particular day in time, and why Paul would say what he said. All too often we forget to use those tools to interpret what is being said.⁴

The Reverend Ella M. Samuels is the presiding elder of the 6th (Augusta/Athens) District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Elder Samuels earned a Business Diploma from Swainsboro Technical College, and studied at East Georgia College, Brewton Parker College, and Erskin Theological Seminary. As a child, Elder Samuels aspired to be a teacher; however, she became an administrative assistant. Reverend Samuels looks forward to writing a book, and conducting leadership and spiritual enrichment workshops in the future. Elder Samuels responded to the question, “is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not?” With great enthusiasm she stated: “It is true in some cases that men and women will

³ Carolyn Tyler Guidry (Bishop 16th Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Los Angeles, California, 20 September 2007.

⁴ Ibid.

oppose female leadership. The reason I say that is because I have had at least two females appointed to a Church and the congregation rejected their leadership.”⁵

In addition, Elder Samuels was asked, “What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church?” She stated:

. . . One of the scriptures that some people use is Paul’s message . . . I think it was in the Corinthian church where women were told to be silent. Sometimes people use this scripture without looking at its historical background or why Paul made this statement at that particular time. So, they use this scripture to perpetuate sexism, but more on a local level than on a denominational level.⁶

The Reverend Angela D. Holiday Wright is an elder for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and a fourth grade teacher. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Allen University, a Masters degree in Education from Allen University, and a Masters of Divinity degree from Turner Theological Seminary at the International Theological Center. Reverend Wright’s future goals are to publish the three children’s books she has written and to write educational curricula. Meanwhile, Reverend Wright is fulfilling her childhood dream of being an educator. In terms of the question, is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not? Reverend Wright replied:

I don’t want to make a generalization but I have experienced just a little of that with older females. I generally have a wonderful rapport with all men; men of all ages and younger women; and again, it won’t apply to all, but I have had some difficulty with the women. I think they are accustomed to having their way, if you will, as far as running the Pastor;

⁵ Ella M. Samuels (Presiding Elder 16th Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Thomason, Georgia, 06 October 2007.

⁶ Ibid.

of being nice and cooking him meals, but that would not fly with me. So, I think there are some obstacles there.⁷

Moreover, Reverend Wright was asked the question, “what scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church?” She said: “Those questions are difficult for me because I have not been able to find any. I think people will pick out just about anything to justify their own agendas, but I have never been able to find any scripture to support sexism; or ordination or not to ordinate women in ministry.”⁸

The Reverend Dr. Althea Brown is an elder for the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Detroit, a Master of Business Administration degree from Central Michigan University, and a Doctorate degree in Chiropractic from Life University. Rev. Brown also earned a Master of Divinity Degree from the ITC in Atlanta, and a Doctorate in Ministry from the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. Prior to entering ministry, Reverend Brown worked as a Chiropractor, a teacher, and an accountant. The question, “Is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not” was not addressed during this interview. However, during the interview with Dr. Brown, the researcher asked her, “What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church?” She stated:

The entire Bible is written in “he” instead of “she.” So, and a lot of times the men will quote that women are supposed to be quiet in church. That is what Paul was speaking about in Corinthians. People take that entire scripture out of context . . . They also use the Pauline scripture that says

⁷ Angela D. Holiday Wright (Elder African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 14 November 2007.

⁸ Ibid.

that women should be quiet in church, and if they have a question, they should ask their husbands at home.⁹

The Reverend Dr. Berlinda A. Love is an Itinerate elder for the Fourth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and a public school teacher. Dr. Love holds a bachelor's degree in education from the College of New Jersey in Ewing Township, New Jersey. She earned a Master of Arts degree in Educational Administration from Rider University in New Jersey, a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Doctorate degree in Sacred Theology from Eastern North Carolina Theological Institute. Dr. Love's future goals are to become a prolific writer (author), and a renowned motivational speaker, and to pastor God's people on a local, national, and international forum. Ironically, Reverend Dr. Love's childhood aspirations were to become a teacher and a doctor. When presented with the question, "is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not?" Dr. Love's passionate response was:

I believe that men and women both oppose female leadership in the church. There are more women than men in the church . . . Many times, their petty jealousies, particularly where single women are concerned, prevent them from realizing their inner potential to move forward in the church.¹⁰

Dr. Love was also asked, "What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church." She said:

⁹ Althea M. Brown (Elder African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Novi, Michigan, 08 November 2007.

¹⁰ Berlinda A. Love (Elder African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Trenton, New Jersey, 17 October 2007.

I have several scriptures that I would like to share with you. First of all, in the New Testament, Paul does not permit a woman to teach a man or to have authority over a man. We can look at 1 Timothy 2:11-14, where it speaks about women learning in quietness and being fully submissive. We can also look at 1 Timothy 3:1-2, where it speaks of overseeing Bishops and Elders being the husband of one wife. When we look at the New Testament, we see Jesus as being the head of the church, and he is male. When we look at the disciples that Jesus selected, they were twelve Men . . .¹¹

The Reverend Joanne Bedford is an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and a Chaplain for the Atlanta Police Department. Reverend Bedford earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Haynes University at Pennsylvania, a Master of Divinity degree and Master of Christian Education degree from Turner Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center. As a young child, Chaplain Bedford decided she would become a teacher; however, she became an accountant before becoming an ordained minister. Reverend Bedford plans to become an educational instructor. Ten minutes into the interview with Rev. Bedford, the researcher asked her if it is true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church? She commented: “Yes, both men and women express an opposition to women being leaders in the church. But, I find that the women often times have more problem with leadership by women than men.”¹²

In addition, Reverend Bedford was asked, “What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church?” Her response was:

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Joanne Bedford (Chaplain African Methodist Episcopal Church) telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 10 November 2007.

The scripture in particular about women keep silent and ask your husbands. .. Also, those household codes that we find in Ephesians and in Colossians, which say wives obey your husbands. Those are very oppressive scriptures for women, and can be used to prevent women from becoming leaders . . . ¹³

The Reverend Dr. Alesia Scott-Ford is the pastor of Saint James AME church in Orange Park, Florida. She has numerous degrees, such as a Bachelor's degree in Religion with a concentration in Chemistry from the University of Florida, a Master's degree in Sociology with a concentration in Gerontology from Atlanta University, a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology with a specialization in Gerontology from the University of South Florida, completed post doctorate work at the University of Michigan and Harvard University, and a Master of Divinity degree from Turner Theological Seminary at the ITC. Dr. Scott-Ford is currently enrolled in a Doctorate of Ministry Program at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio. Her previous occupation as a college professor is a far cry from the childhood goal of becoming a physician. Seemingly divine interventions guided her on a spiritual path that might one day help her fulfill her future desire of becoming a pastor of a mega church.¹⁴ During the interview Dr. Scott-Ford said, "Yes, I think both sexes have an issue with female leadership." Additionally, in Dr. Scott-Ford's responses to the question, "What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church," she replied, "Oh God that is featured in Corinthians, about women should be quiet in the church."¹⁵

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Alesia Scott-Ford (Pastor St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Orange Park, Florida, 16 November 2007).

¹⁵ Ibid.

The Reverend Dr. Laverne Whitehead Reed is the pastor of Richard Allen Chapel AME church in Dallas, Texas, and an adjunct professor for Truant County College in Fort Worth, Texas. Pastor Reed has a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech Communications and Human Relations from Texas Christian University, a Master of Theology and Pastoral Counseling degree from Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University. She also earned a Doctorate of Ministry with a concentration in Theology from Visions International School of Ministry. Reverend Dr. Reed's childhood dream was to become a teacher or a nurse. Both of her childhood dreams became reality before she was employed as Dean of Chapel at Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas. Now a pastor, Dr. Whitehead Reed's future aspiration is to travel abroad and teach English as a second language. When asked, "Is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not," Pastor Whitehead Reed stated:

That is true and I have had some dialogue with some people about that and some say, I just don't believe a woman should preach. Some others have used scriptural interpretations, mainly the epistles of Paul to support their thought. Some believe that women should not have authority or rule over men . . . ¹⁶

Reverend Dr. Reed was excited when asked, "What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church?" She exclaimed:

Oh, wow! Let's see, we can look at Corinthians . . . Paul talks about women ought to be quiet in the church, that is the one they always use for sure; however, they do not understand the heresy that was going on and what the situation was at the time. . . . They use 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 2:3-5; and 1 Timothy 3:1-7.¹⁷

¹⁶ LaVerne Whitehead Reed (Pastor Richard Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church) telephone interview by author, tape recording, Dallas, Texas, 15 October 2007.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The Reverend Dr. Sheryl A. Matlock is the pastor of Saint James AME Church in Denton, Texas, and a Plato Lab Manager for the Fort Worth Independent School District. Pastor Matlock earned a bachelor's degree from Paul Quinn College, a Master of Arts in Theology from Visions International University, and a Doctorate of Ministry degree from Visions International University. As a child, pastor Matlock aspired to become a social worker or a mortician. In the future, Reverend Matlock would like to establish a ministry for underprivileged, homeless, and/or mentally or physically abused women. "Is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not," is what the researcher asked Dr. Matlock during their telephone interview. She replied:

I have been told so, and I believe that men and women do oppose female leadership in the church. I believe more so that women oppose female leadership in the church. It could be that the ministry has just been a male dominated profession for so many years. Or it could be that probably 75 percent to 80 percent of all female ministers are single and they could be a threat to some women in the church.¹⁸

Furthermore, when the researcher asked Dr. Matlock what scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church, she said: "I am not sure of any at this time; however, I am sure there are some . . ."¹⁹

In essence, more than 90 percent of the African Methodist Episcopal clergywomen in this study strongly implied that it is true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church. Two commonly cited reasons are misinterpretation of scripture (belief that women are not called to preach), and congregations' rejection of

¹⁸ Sheryl A. Matlock (Pastor Saint James AME Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Denton, Texas, 22 October 2007.

¹⁹ Ibid.

female leadership. Furthermore, approximately 80 percent of the AMEC clergywomen in this study cited that the Corinthians text is used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church: Particularly First Corinthians 14:34-35, where it is stated:

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Scripture says, if they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for women to speak in the churches.²⁰

In addition, First Timothy 2:11-14, and First Timothy 3:1-7 are also recurring scriptures cited for perpetuating sexist attitudes in the church.

Voices From Within the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church has made great strides in terms of ordaining women as clergy; however, some disparities continue to exist within the denominational structure. In an effort to determine what these disparities are and why they exist, ten African-American CME clergywomen were interviewed for this study. For instance, Elder Jane E. Thomas, Dr. Essie Clark-George, Dr. Johnnie K. Dollarhide, Pastor Lavonia K. McIntyre, Pastor Leticia Jackson Douglas, Pastor Marvella Ivery, The Reverend Regina L. Reese-Young, Pastor Susie B.K. Tywman, Dr. Teresa E. Snorton, and Pastor Val Jackson all have stories to tell about their journey in ministry. Their story will indeed shed light on women's triumphs and challenges within the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church denomination.

The Reverend Jane E. Thomas is the presiding elder of the Macon/Barnesville Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She attended Fort

²⁰ *The New International/King James Parallel Bible* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1985), 1429.

Valley State University. Elder Thomas has already fulfilled her childhood aspirations of becoming an educator, and plans to one day serve on the episcopacy in the CME. Elder Thomas pondered the question, “In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?” Finally, she said: “Now, again, I followed the outlined Bishops Course of Study, and the members of the ministerial board of examinations made recommendations for my ordination in the designed two-year period that had already been outlined.”²¹

Reverend Thomas also was asked, “In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?” Elated, she said, “No, not absolutely equal, because the ills of sexism are imbedded in the world of the church.”²²

The Reverend Dr. Essie Clark-George is the pastor of Israel Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Gary, Indiana. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in Human Service Administration from Northeastern Illinois University, a Master of Divinity degree in Pastoral Care and Counseling from McCormick Theological Seminary, and a Doctorate of Ministry degree in the Practice of Human Service and Urban Revitalization from McCormick Theological Seminary. As a child, Dr. Clark-George wanted to become a night club singer. She now plans to become a General Officer for the CME denomination. When asked “In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why,” she kindly replied:

I don’t know if I would call it a stage. I would call it a move of God. Why, so that I could live out the inspiration of the ministry that I felt God was giving me to at that particular time. I would be able to serve Holy

²¹ Jane E. Thomas (Presiding Elder Macon/Barnesville Episcopal District Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Warner Robbins, Georgia, 08 November 2007.

²² Ibid.

Communion in our denomination, to marry persons, and to me that is sacred. Everyone cannot do that. They cannot administer those elements. You must be an ordained person in the life of God's ministry to do so and to me that is very important.²³

Dr. Clark-George graciously answered the question, "In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?" She stated: "Well, we just got Bishop Paul A. G. Stewart who is leading the way in the CME Church. He is opening the doors for women to pastor, at the same level that men have pastored through the years. He is an exception to the rule. Now that may hurt me later on, but that is my opinion."²⁴

The Reverend Dr. Johnnie K. Dollarhide is the senior pastor at Lane Chapel CME Church in Louisville, Texas, and she is a university professor. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Comprehensive Social Service from Texas College, a Master of Science degree in Sociology from Texas A & M at Commerce, Texas, and is scheduled to graduate with a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of North Texas in 2008. Prior to ministry, Reverend Dollarhide was employed as a public school administrator. However, she initially planned to be a missionary to the country of Africa. One day, she plans to run for Bishop of the CME Church. When Reverend Dollarhide was asked, "In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?" She said:

I sought ordination when I knew that I had spent all my life in Christian education. I had been given a position as State Director of Christian Education, and I worked with the state leadership training school as assistant dean. I knew that I needed to seek ordination. I knew God was

²³ Essie Clark George (Pastor Israel Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Gary, Indiana, 15 October 2007.

²⁴ Ibid.

calling me to do something deeper. Although I was in public school education at the time; I sought ordination because of a calling in my heart.²⁵

Reverend Dollarhide was asked “In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?” She responded:

I have been secretary of my annual conference for nine years. Each year we see more and more women being admitted on trial. During this last annual conference, of all of those who have been on trial for two years or longer, 17 out of 20, were women. Women are not being ordained, but they are being admitted on trial. I think about five or maybe six of those women have been on trial for seven years or more.²⁶

The Reverend Lavonia K. McIntyre is the pastor of Israel Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Jackson, Georgia. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Morgan State University, a Master’s degree in Christian Education and a Master of Divinity degree from Turner Theological Seminary at The ITC. Pastor McIntyre always strives to be the best at whatever she does. This former homemaker plans to earn a Ph.D. in Pastoral Care. Pastor McIntyre was delighted to answer the question, “In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?” She said:

I was not one that sought after ordination. When I came to seminary I came to get a Master of Art degree in education so I could work with youth, and so that I could be better at working with youth. I will never forget the day when I tried to register at ITC, to put my classes in the computer, this was my second year here. We had just gotten brand new computer systems, and the computer system would not let me register. The only class I could register for was a preaching class. I registered for that class thinking that okay when this is finished, I can get back out of

²⁵ Johnnie K. Dollarhide (Pastor Lane Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Louisville, Texas, 02 November 2007.

²⁶ Ibid.

this; all they have to do is unlock the system. When I got in the computer, I put all the rest of my classes in there, and tried to omit the preaching class, but the computer went “SOUND.” I was like okay. Then I went to the registrar. The registrar said that the only way I would get out of the class, the instructor and the dean would have to sign-off on your form. I went to the class and the teacher was Dr. Carolyn Knight. Dr. Carolyn Knight said, “No, she would not let me out of the class until I had preached a sermon, but if your denominational dean will sign this form, I will sign it too.” So, I took the form back to my dean; he said, “No; in order for you to get out of this class the teacher has to sign this form.” I ended up having to preach a sermon. I preached that first sermon and I gave her the form and she told me she would not let me out of the class.²⁷

The researcher waited patiently as Reverend McIntyre responded to the question, “In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?” She exclaimed:

There is sexism during appointment time. For example, I have experienced that this year, but this is the first time I experienced it outwardly. I might have experienced it before and just didn’t pay attention to it. This year I was told that I would be moved. You are not normally told that you are going to be moved. However, they do hint around so you can prepare yourself. During the process of the moving I found out that I was one of the last persons to be placed. I was offered a position in a mission church, which had no money, no funds, no paycheck, and you have to start from the ground up. No church building, no members, no nothing. With my skills, I did not feel that God called me to be a mission’s pastor. In other words, they wanted me to be a start-up pastor. I know that God has, excuse my expression, equipped me to clean up churches, and I call that affectionately the clean up woman, but I don’t feel within my spirit that God has appointed me and given me the skills to start a church. So, I felt sexism in that area. I will never forget it, I was sitting in a meeting and one of my fellow seminarians, who was sitting in the meeting, was discussing this mission church. This brother, who is in one of the top five churches said, “send McIntyre, she’s not doing anything. Let her go.” Then I said to him “well why you don’t go. Give up what you have and go.” He said, “the only way I would go is if they pay me for going up there.”²⁸

²⁷ Lavonia McIntyre (Pastor Israel Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia 08 September 2007.

²⁸ Ibid.

The Reverend Leticia Jackson Douglas is the pastor at Servants of Christ Ministries CME Church in Fairburn, Georgia. She also is an accounting manager. Pastor Jackson Douglas has a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Hampton University, and a Master of Divinity degree from ITC. As a child she contemplated pursuing several careers, such as a lawyer, a counselor, and a psychologist. Instead, Pastor Jackson Douglas became an accountant and minister who one day plans to pastor her own church. Reverend Douglas was asked, "In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?" She replied:

I didn't necessarily seek ordination. It was just something that just happened. I just believe that it was God ordained. Just like in the book of Jeremiah; Jeremiah says that, "I ordained you even in the womb," so, with that being said, I just believed that it was God ordained. It was nothing that I just wanted to do. It is just something that happened, but the only two problems that I have had are those from colleagues . . . I guess to break it down into simplest terms; the way that it happened with me is that the Pastor that I was with, assisting at that time, she needed help because of the large church that she had. The ordination was a factor in helping to visit the sick and to do other things in our ministry. So, it wasn't something that I just said okay, "I wanted to be ordained and this . . . this . . . this." It just happened. I was in a place at that point in time where I was ready to take the steps that I had to take in order to get to that point. It wasn't something that I just said "okay, this is what I want."²⁹

Moreover, the researchers asked Pastor Jackson Douglas, "In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?" Immediately, she

²⁹ Leticia Jackson Douglas (Pastor Servants of Christ Ministries Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 08 September 2007.

said “I think it is more or less on a political level and it may be the favor that you have with that particular person.”³⁰

Marvella Ivery is a website consultant and the pastor of Love Miracle Temple CME Church in Macon, Georgia. Her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology is from Alabama State University, her Master of Science degree in Counseling is from Fort Valley State University, and she is now pursuing a Master of Divinity degree from Liberty University. This one-time school teacher wanted to be an actress; however, her future desire is to be in full-time ministry and to produce a movie. About ten minutes into the interview Pastor Ivery was asked, “In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?” She politely said:

I wanted to eventually be in full connection, so that I could have a voting voice in the general conference; and be a delegate to the general conference. That way I can vote up or down about whatever issues came up at general conference. This way I will have a voice and try to help bring change to the church.³¹

In addition, Reverend Ivery was asked, “In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?” She humbly stated: “They (clergywomen) get the rural churches; they get the smaller churches; or the mission churches; or get a brand new assignment just to say they got a new assignment so they can start a new church.”³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Marvella Ivery (Pastor Love Miracle Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recoding, Macon, Georgia 26 November 2007.

³² Ibid., 26 November 2007.

The Reverend Regina L. Reese-Young is the pastor of Calvary Christian CME Church in Buffalo, New York. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business from Lane College, and a Master of Divinity degree from ITC in Atlanta, Georgia. She was once an administrative assistant at the University of California Los Angeles. Once upon a time, Pastor Reese-Young considered a law career. Today, one of her greatest aspirations is to successfully pastor her congregation and to become the Bishop of the CME denomination.³³ She was asked, “In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?” Excited, she said:

Well, the way it worked 28-years ago when I started my process, it really wasn't a matter of pursuing it. I was at the very beginning of my call to ministry and I had been in ministry, but not ordained ministry. I had been in music ministry; in youth ministry, and had done quite a few things. But, once I accepted my call to preach, it was at the very beginning of when I was moved forward into the ordination process. That was how we understood it to be done. So, it was right at the very, very beginning.³⁴

The Reverend Susie B. K. Twyman is the pastor of New Victory CME Church in Rome, Georgia. She received a Professional Registered Nurse Diploma from Grady Memorial Hospital School of Nursing—a school that is no longer in existence. She also received a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Jackson State University, and a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of West Georgia in Carrollton, Georgia. Reverend Twyman is presently enrolled in the Ministers International Bible Institute. Prior to her ministerial career, she worked as a nurse at Northwest Georgia Regional Hospital. Pastor Twyman's teaching engagements inside

³³ Regina Reese-Young (Pastor Calvary Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Buffalo, New York, 26 October 2007.

³⁴ Ibid.

and outside the church made her childhood aspiration of being a teacher a reality. In every endeavor, she strives to be her best. “In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why,” Pastor Twyman was asked. She noted:

Well, as I stated just a few minutes ago, I waited too long to pursue my calling. But, now that I am doing the will of the Father, I feel much better and I am at peace with the Lord. I know when I was standing before the Bishop, and he recognized how old I was, he said, “Well, Minister Twyman, you waited kind of late, didn’t you?” But now that I am focusing on God and his word rather than what human beings think, I feel better about myself; and I do not worry about what people think; what their actions and words towards me are; as I did before. So, I have let go of my inferiority and I am more . . . even though I know people have their opinions about this, I am not letting that bother me anymore.³⁵

So consequently, Twyman was also asked, “In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?” She stated:

Well, I am really reluctant to label this as sexism during appointments, but in my opinion, women ministers usually are appointed to the smaller churches. As I had mentioned earlier, to start-up mission churches; or they are assigned to co-pastor with their male counterparts. Now all of these charges require more work and more detail, and even taking orders and etc. So, in some ways to me that could be looked at as a form of sexism. However, since women have only been in this role for a short time, compared to me in the ministry, I am sure the political answer is that their male counterparts have more seniority than they do. So, maybe we can measure this better by comparing women with seniority; getting smaller appointments than a male who has had less seniority. I don’t know of that being in operation, so I am going to say that hopefully after women have been in the ministry in our connectional church for a while, that we will not see this happening. Since women are young in the ministry, so to speak, maybe that is why they are still receiving smaller appointments.³⁶

Dr. Teresa E. Snorton is the Executive Director of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. at Emory in Decatur, Georgia, and an ordained CME Chaplain.

³⁵ Susie B.K. Twyman (Pastor New Victory Ministries Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, tape recording, Rome, Georgia, 10 October 2007.

³⁶ Ibid.

Dr. Snorton holds the following degrees: a Bachelor of Sociology/History/ Education from Vanderbilt University, a Master of Divinity from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, a Master of Theology from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Certificate in Patient Counseling, and a Doctor of Ministry from the Union Theological Seminary. As a youth Dr. Snorton wanted to be a lawyer and then a pediatrician, but chose to become a Chaplain. She is interested in working in the field of pastoral education or theological education at the executive level. In addition, she is considering candidacy for CME bishop. Dr. Snorton was asked, “in what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?” She pleasantly expressed:

When I first accepted my call to ministry it was between my junior and senior year in college. Like I said earlier, I really wasn't sure what that meant and really couldn't put a face on it. So my first tag line was that I was going to do Christian education. Once I went to seminary I began to see other options, and from that point forward I was involved in the ordination process.³⁷

She was also asked, “In what ways if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?” She articulated:

Well, I think particularly from my experience in the Methodist church, and I would say more specifically my denomination, there is a tendency that you have to pay your dues, so to speak. I think that that motif gets imposed on women even more so because of sexism. Often women who are more qualified than men get sent less significant appointments; I think it is because they are women. I think there is some fear on the part of leadership that if they send a woman pastor to a certain church, something might happen, and people might stop supporting the program of the church. I think it is also kind of that fear of risk taking and what this might do to upset the status quo.³⁸

³⁷ Teresa E. Snorton (Chaplain Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and Executive Director of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. at Emory), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Decatur, Georgia, 27 September 2007.

³⁸ Ibid.

The Reverend Val Jackson is the pastor of Livingston Chapel CME Church in Locust Grove, Georgia. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Piedmont College. She has a Master's of Social Work from the University of Georgia, a Master of Divinity degree from Emory University, and is presently pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. Reverend Jackson once worked as a social worker; today she continues to apply those skills through ministerial outreach. Pastor Jackson was asked, "In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?" She replied, "I sought ordination back in 1996, and I just felt like I was called to the ordained ministry. So, first I felt and thought I was called into the ministry and then I followed up with being ordained shortly after that."³⁹

She was also asked, "In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process." She said:

Well, a lot of times the women are given churches that are kind of far out geographically, and they are given smaller charges than men. I don't know why. Someone would have to explicitly tell me why in order for me to answer that part of the question. It appears to me that we get sent out further than a lot of the men and we get the smaller congregations. Of course, there is nothing wrong with smaller congregations, but that's just the way it seems.⁴⁰

In summary, about 80 percent of the CME clergywomen in this study stated that they pursued ordination once or after they accepted their call into ministry. At least 50 percent of the clergywomen were already involved in administration, music, youth, or

³⁹ Val Jackson (Pastor Livingston Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Locust Grove, Georgia 05 October 2007.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

some other ministry in the church prior to their pursuit of ordination. The women in this study pursued ordination for the following reasons: (1) To perform sacred church elements, such as baptism and serving communion, and (2) To help bring about change in the denomination and people's lives. Approximately 90 percent of the clergywomen in the CME study indicated that women experience sexism during the appointment process. Some recurring common experiences women noted during the appointment process are:

- (1) Women being on trial for many years before their ordination is approved, and
- (2) When women receive ordination they are appointed to smaller churches or mission churches. However, one clergywoman stated that she knows there is a bishop who is opening doors for women to enter into ministry.

Voices From Within the United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church has endured many changes, such as church divisions due to racial tension and unresolved disagreements due to racial issues. Seemingly, the United Methodist denomination is presently coping with the influx of women's pursuit of church leadership roles on the pastoral, district superintendent, and bishop levels, roles men have dominated since the church's birth in the United States of America. Bishop Violet L. Fisher, District Superintendent Lillian Washington, The Reverend Bridgette Young, Pastor Blondell Miller, Chaplain Cynthia V. Vaughn, Pastor Deborah S. Holloway, Pastor Elizabeth Ackerman, Elder Maxine Allen, Elder Renita Thomas, and Dr. Traci West were randomly selected to participate in this study. Perhaps their experiences will help shed light on the challenges, if any, that women in leadership roles within the UMC are encountering.

The Reverend Violet L. Fisher is the Bishop of the UMC North Central and Western New York Episcopal District. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from Bowie State University, a Master of Education degree from George Washington University, and a Master of Divinity degree from Eastern Baptist Seminary. Bishop Fisher was once an English teacher then decided to be a minister and a missionary. She plans to teach at a seminary, continue to participate in global missionary work, and to write a memoir when she retires. Bishop Fisher was asked, “Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism, in the church—why or why not?” She replied:

Inferiority plays a role, because the mindset is that men are superior, that men have the gifts; that men can do it; and women are treated as second-class citizens. You are not “as good as;” and so because you are not “as good as,” you have got to work harder; and you have got to do more.⁴¹

After being asked, “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination,” she responded:

When I began my process towards ordination in both of the movements that I have served in, I did not have problems. It was at a time that women were already being ordained for the Methodist Church, because I did not come into the Methodist Church until around 1983. I was raised in the Methodist Church, then left and became part of the holiness movement. Women were the founder of that movement, so women were always in leadership roles. I was 25 when I was ordained, and I was the first woman ordained in the Pentecostal movement. When I came into the mainline denomination, United Methodist Church, women had already been ordained, so I did not have any problems getting through the system.⁴²

⁴¹ Violet L. Fisher (Bishop North Central and Western New York Episcopal District United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Rochester, New York, 19 October 2007.

⁴² Ibid.

The Reverend Lillian Washington is the District Superintendent of the Hartsville District of the United Methodist Church. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and a Master of Divinity degree from Gammon Theological Seminary at ITC. For seven years she worked various secular jobs before going into ministry. However, as a young child she aspired to be a teacher. Today Reverend Washington is looking forward to retirement. The researcher asked Reverend Washington, “Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church, why or why not,” and she said:

Yes, I think it does for two reasons: (1) There are men and there are people who are in positions of authority who devalue and see women as inferior, (2) There are also women because of the system we have grown up in and we have had to be a part of, often find themselves feeling that they are inferior, because they have been told that, and that has been the thought that has been placed in their minds. Women need to get rid of that kind of mindset.⁴³

Several minutes later she was asked, “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?” She replied:

Well I was ordained a Deacon in the United Methodist Church in 1977, and so that was a time when there were very few women role models. For instance, when I was in seminary, I was up for Deacon’s orders and I had to make 5-trips from Atlanta to South Carolina at different times to meet with the Board of Ministry and others and I was not cleared for ordination until a later date. I had to meet with the entire board for a second time. It was a lot of things that were being done to discourage us. So, there are a lot of stories I can tell about that one.⁴⁴

⁴³ Lillian Washington (District Superintendent for the Hartsville District United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Hartsville, South Carolina, 29 November 2007.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The Reverend Bridgette Young is the Associate Dean of the Chapel of Religious Life at Emory University, and an ordained Chaplain for the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management from Illinois Institute of Theology, a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Master of Divinity degree from the ITC. She worked as a Human Resource Manager and Director as well as in sales and marketing for ten years. As a youth, Reverend Young planned to become a teacher, but pursued a business career for practical reasons. Reverend Young enjoys working with college students because it affords her the opportunity to help shape their destiny. Therefore, she always continues to be involved in these types of endeavors. Mesmerized by Chaplain Young's endeavors, the researcher paused before asking her, "Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?" She noted:

I think the perception of inferiority does play a role in sexism, because inferiority is all about perception. It is about one believing that one is either better than someone or less than someone. So, absolutely the perception of inferiority plays a role in that. I would say even amongst those groups that are marginalized. So, with sexism some women do believe that they are less than men; in terms of being able to lead, in terms of being able to be an authority figure; in terms of how God views them as inferior. Again, that is my perception because what they would say is, "No, I don't see myself as inferior, but I see myself in a particular role, and that is the role that God has given me; it is not inferior, it is just different."⁴⁵

As the interview continued, Reverend Young was asked "What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?" She said:

⁴⁵ Bridgette Young (Chaplain United Methodist Church and Associate Dean Chapel of Religious Life at Emory University), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia 04 October 2007.

I was very fortunate and very blessed. I don't really remember experiencing any challenges any different than I think others have. The only challenge was that I think there is greater suspicion of a single woman, because there are issues in all of the mainline churches in terms of, what we do about sexuality, and homosexuals and that kind of thing. I was asked questions about was I dating anybody; was I married, did I plan to get married, all those kinds of things. So I would say those kinds of assumptions and questions were probably the greatest challenge, but nothing that stopped me or was a roadblock for me.⁴⁶

The Reverend Blondell Miller is a part-time local pastor at Rock Springs and Saint Peters United Methodist Church in Hartsville, South Carolina. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Morris Brown College, and she has a Social Work Certificate from Winthrop College. Pastor Miller once planned to be a doctor, but chose a career in social work. She plans to one day become a full-time elder in the UMC. When asked, "Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not," she said, "Yes, I think both are related because where there is inferiority, sexism also comes into play. Sexism usually affects the appointment process."⁴⁷ Also, the researcher asked Pastor Miller, "What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?" She replied: "Presently, I am in the process of completing the Conference Course of Study. When I complete that then I will go into the advanced course of study. I am working with the District Ordination Board and so far I have not had any challenges."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Blondell Miller (Pastor Rock Springs and Saint Peters United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Hartsville, South Carolina, 27 November 2007.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

The Reverend Cynthia V. Vaughn is an ordained UMC Chaplain who also is a Coordinator of Pastoral Services at Wesleywood Center in Atlanta, Georgia. She has a Bachelor's degree in English from Winston Salem State University, a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration from Ohio State University, and a Master of Divinity degree from Gammon Theological Seminary at ITC. As a youth, Chaplain Vaughn wanted to grow up and make lots of money; as an adult she worked as a manager for Bellsouth. Reverend Vaughn plans to become a Clinical Pastoral Educator. She was asked, "Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?" She responded: "If I understand what you are saying correctly, there is a part of me that thinks that sexism is the devaluing means, rather than inferiority being sexism. I think that sexism is the means by which we become inferior."⁴⁹ In addition, she was also asked, "What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?" She said: "I decided to pursue ordination when I was in my forties and I had a full career in the corporate world. When I received a call into ministry, I decided to leave the corporate world and go into ministry."⁵⁰

The Reverend Deborah S. Holloway is the Assistant Pastor at Central United Methodist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. She earned an Associate of Arts degree from Massey Business College, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical Studies from Beulah Heights Bible College, a Master of Divinity degree from ITC, and is presently pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry degree from ITC in Atlanta, Georgia. Pastor Holloway once

⁴⁹ Cynthia V. Vaughn (Chaplain United Methodist Church and Coordinator of Pastoral Services at Wesleywood Center), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia 18 September 2007.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

worked as a telecommunications agent at Bellsouth Mobility. Her childhood aspiration was to prove to others that she could get a college degree. Moreover, Reverend Holloway plans to complete the doctorate degree program and become a full-time pastor. So consequently, she was asked, “Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?” She replied: “Yes it does. Men think that because they are males, they, according to scripture, are better than females. The researcher also asked Pastor Holloway, “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?” She insisted: “I had this experience in the Baptist church, but none in the United Methodist Church.”⁵¹

The Reverend Elizabeth Ackerman is a part-time local pastor at Poplar Springs UMC in Southwest Atlanta, Georgia. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Audiology from Hampton University. She has a Master’s degree in Education from Georgia State University, and she is presently enrolled in the Master of Divinity degree program at Candler Theological Seminary. Pastor Ackerman once desired to be an educator, but became a Public Relations Director for Fulton County Public Schools for twenty-seven years and for the Atlanta Public School System for two years. She aspires to be a master trainer and facilitator who also work as a full-time pastor. The researcher inquired, “Reverend Ackerman, does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?” She answered: “Inferiority meaning that some people

⁵¹ Deborah S. Holloway (Pastor Central United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 12 October 2007.

are put down, some are given advantage over others, and the answer would be, yes.”⁵²

So, when asked “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?”

Pastor Ackerman replied: “I have just gotten started and I have not had any challenges. I take it back. There was one. I was asked ‘why did I not pursue local pastor route,’ and it may have been more of my age than my sex, but, I am not sure.”⁵³

Maxine Allen is the Minister of Missions and Ethnic Ministries for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion and Philosophy from Philander Smith College, and earned a Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in Christian Education from Gammon Theological Seminary at ITC. For twenty years she worked at Southwestern Bell (now AT&T) in various positions, such as clerk and manger; however, she once wanted to be a nurse or a teacher. Elder Allen plans to work in the ministry for at least another ten years doing her vocation with excellence. The researcher asked, “Elder Allen, does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?” She stated:

I believe that it does play a role. I think there is a perceived inferiority about women and ethnic groups. I also think that there is a perceived inferiority with regarding a certain theological perspective. For example, if you are perceived as theologically liberal, versus being perceived as theologically fundamental, you are perceived as being somewhat inferior in Arkansas, after all the “good ole boys” control everything. If you believe Christ died for all, and not just for a hand-picked few, you are

⁵² Elizabeth Ackerman (Pastor Poplar Springs United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Southwest Atlanta, Georgia, 04 October 2007.

⁵³ Ibid.

advocating something that those persons have a problem with theologically.⁵⁴

Elder Allen was also asked, “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?” She said:

Well, as I stated earlier I am the first African American female to be an ordained Elder and appointed in the Arkansas Annual Conference; and that did not happen until 1999. By and large, the African American male ministers were supportive. The Lay women however did not understand why I wanted to be ordained; and these were the persons who really gave me the headaches. In our process when I came before the Arkansas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, it was a white woman who challenged my work and who challenged my ability to be in ministry. So, it was initially the women who challenged me. Now over time, a lot of that has mellowed, and now it is the white males that really give me problems. I believe in many instances they are threatened.⁵⁵

The Reverend Renita Thomas is an ordained elder and the Associate Director in the Office of Church Development for the North Georgia Conference United Methodist Church. She is an elder who works primarily with African-American congregations. Elder Thomas has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of West Georgia and a Master of Divinity degree from Gammon Theological Seminary at ITC. Reverend Thomas planned to pursue a career in the entertainment or social work field, but became a minister instead. Her future desire is to continue doing ministry. Elder Thomas the researcher asked, “Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?” She explained: “Yes, because if people feel that women are inferior then they would be prejudiced against them in the church.” Before she replied, Elder

⁵⁴ Maxine Allen (Elder United Methodist Church and Minister of Mission and Ethnic Ministries Arkansas Conference), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Little Rock, Arkansas, 18 November 2007.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Thomas asked, “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?”

She replied: “I particularly did not experience many challenges. I am not sure, but I don’t know why. My ordination went pretty smoothly.”⁵⁶

Dr. Traci West is an ordained United Methodist Church elder, and an Associate Professor of Ethics and African-American Studies at Drew University Theological Seminary. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University, her Master of Divinity degree from Pacific School of Religion, and her Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary. Dr. West was pastor of a small church in Bloomfield, Connecticut for five years before becoming a campus minister. At age 15, she decided to become a minister, and remained committed to her decision. Dr. West has written about violence against African-American women, and would like to revisit the subject of violence against women. She looks forward to working on another book project soon. Dr. West was asked by the researcher, “Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?” She responded:

I don’t know . . . So I’m feeling like I don’t; that is not a criteria that I feel I want to give any legitimacy to; that you can actually say that there is some objective standard of what kind of person should be considered inferior. However, I do think that there are prejudices that exist and are rampant; that consider certain people to be inferior. And I do think that includes the leadership of women across racial, ethnic backgrounds, as well as across sexual orientation; region of the country, etc.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Renita Thomas (Elder and Associate Director in the Office of Church Development North Georgia Conference United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 31 October 2007.

⁵⁷ Traci West (Elder United Methodist Church and Associate Professor of Ethics and African-American Studies at Drew University), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Madison, New Jersey, 21 November 2007.

Dr. West was also asked, “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination,” and she articulated:

The District Superintendent told me about a church that wanted me and I was excited. It was in Bloomfield, Connecticut. I grew up in Connecticut, so it is in the New York Conference, so it seemed like familiar turf for me; a suburban community outside of Hartford, Connecticut. What happened took place a few days later, it was said that I had been presented to the church and the church had decided that they did not want me; and they didn't want me because they didn't want a woman; they had never had a woman pastor before. They did not want me because I was black, because they had just had their first black pastor and he had not worked out, so they didn't want another one. They did not want me because I was young; fairly young anyway because they currently had a white male retired pastor, and it helped them to realize that they wanted an older very mature pastor in age. I remember being extremely upset, and saying “well listen we will try and find something else, I am sorry this did not really work out for you, and we will get back to you.” To be honest when I got off the phone, I cried; I can remember really being so hurt, and in some ways dismayed that all of the studying I had just completed in seminary on theology, on preaching, on the history of Christianity, on liturgy, and how to baptize, and what all that means when you do baptize, what the words mean. That the only thing that had been discussed in terms of my appointment and whether or not I had any qualifications that would make me an appropriate fit for that particular congregation, had to do with my age, my race and my gender; and nothing to do with my gifts and graces for ministry; absolutely nothing.⁵⁸

In review, about 90 percent of the United Methodist Church clergywomen in this study agreed that inferiority does indeed play a role in the existence of sexism in the church. They cite two primary reasons for its existence: (1) Men perceive that they are superior to women, particularly in terms of gifts and graces. Therefore, men think they should be the leaders or authoritarians, and (2) Women have a tendency to consciously or subconsciously perceive themselves as inferior because of traditional beliefs dictated by such perceptions. Furthermore, less than 50 percent of the clergywomen who

⁵⁸ Ibid.

participated in this study indicated that they encountered challenges with pursuing ordination within the UMC, stating that their ordinations progressed smoothly. On the contrary, the 50 percent of clergywomen who indicated that they experienced challenges with pursuing ordination indicated disparities such as slow ordination process, woman's inhumanity to woman, and racism. The findings and discussions throughout the remainder of this chapter are a reflection of the participants' subjective awareness of (1) Self-image, (2) Perceived ministerial barriers, and (3) Ministerial accomplishments.

Findings and Discussions

Each African-American clergywoman was selected from one of the following categories: bishop, district superintendent (UMC), presiding elder (AME/CME), pastor, elder, chaplain, or scholar. A total of ten participants were randomly selected from each of the following denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church.

Table 1 shows the number of African-American women ministers who participated in this study. The research includes two AME bishops, one UMC bishop, one AME presiding elder, one CME presiding elder, one UMC district superintendent, three AME pastors, eight CME pastors, three UMC pastors, three AME elders, two UMC elders, one AME chaplain, one CME chaplain, two UMC chaplains, and one UMC scholar. This investigation includes a total of three bishops, three district superintendents/presiding elders, fourteen pastors, five elders, four chaplains, and one scholar.

Table 1. Number of participants: African-American women ministers

Position/Title	AME	CME	UMC
Bishop	2	0	1
District Superintendent (UMC) / Presiding Elder (AME/CME)	1	1	1
Pastor	3	8	3
Elder	3	0	2
Chaplain	1	1	2
Scholar	0	0	1
Total	10	10	10

Furthermore, this research consists of sixteen interview questions that fit into seven factors that influence the impact of sexism on African-American women ministers in Methodism. The following is a sample of comments as they relate to factor one: men and/or women's opposition to female leadership in the church. In response to the question "What is sexism," the Bishops in this study defined sexism as the discrimination based on gender. Three district superintendents/presiding elders defined sexism as the exploitation of one gender by another gender. Fourteen pastors in this study defined sexism as negative perceptions and stereotypical attitudes towards a particular gender. Five elders defined sexism as discrimination of one sex towards another sex whereby one gender (particularly males) devalues females. Four chaplains in this research defined sexism as the oppression or alienation of an individual based on their gender. The scholar in this study defined sexism as power struggle that takes place in institutions that oftentimes deprives one gender (particularly females) of greater privileges and status within society. For example, women's voices indicated the following:

. . . All the “isms” have to do with a system that is so well entrenched that it marginalizes a certain group of people. So, sexism are things that are institutionally entrenched, whether that is in an institution or it is in our society or in our culture, it marginalizes women and doesn’t give them equal access or equal consideration.⁵⁹

Sexism involves power, and privilege, and status that is disproportionately conferred upon males, men in our society; males. And, because of that conferral of power and privilege and status, it also means that women in our society are disadvantaged; considered to have lesser status; given lesser privileges; and often, not always have lesser power in institutions, instead of their male counterparts.⁶⁰

Moreover, the following is a sample of comments as they relate to factor one:

men and/or women’s opposition to female leadership in the church. In response to the question, “Do you think sexism exists in the church—why or why not?” One hundred percent of the subjects in the bishop category agreed that sexism exists in the church because the traditional culture of the church prefers male leadership. One hundred percent of the district superintendents/presiding elders stated that sexism exists in the church. The primary reason for its existence is male perception of women’s abilities. One hundred percent of the subjects in the pastor category agreed that sexism exists in the church for two primary reasons: (1) Negative perceptions about female leadership abilities, and (2) Misinterpretation of scripture that validates the devaluing of female leadership and authority. Pastors indicated that this same perception also is present in secular arenas. One hundred percent of the elders in this study agreed that sexism exists in the church, indicating that clergymen think that leadership positions are not a woman’s

⁵⁹ Bridgette Young (Chaplain United Methodist Church and Associate Dean of Religious Life at Emory University), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 04 October 2007.

⁶⁰ Traci West (Elder United Methodist Church and Associate Professor of Ethics and African-American Studies at Drew University), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Madison, New Jersey, 21 November 2007.

place. Also, elders insisted that this type of attitude and/or perception is prevalent in mainstream society. One hundred percent of the Chaplains who participated in this research agreed that sexism exists in the church because of misinterpretation of scripture and socialization. The scholar in this study stated that sexism exists in the church due to misunderstanding of the Bible, and the deletion of women's contributions to society throughout history. For example, women's voices indicated the following:

Oh yeah, sexism exists in the church. In a society where dichotomous thinking kind of prevails, it is not unusual that there would be that same kind of interpretational climate, when it comes to gender and gender differences around male and female. So, I guess by virtue of being a larger culture, the church holds some sexist ideas where there is a tendency to evaluate and judge and discriminate on the basis of gender.⁶¹

Yes, it definitely exists in the church, regardless of denomination. The AME has made great strides however, in that we now have four female bishops and women are pastoring large churches throughout the denomination.⁶²

Hence, the following is a sample of comments about factor one: men and/or women's opposition to female leadership in the church. In answer to the question, "Is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church—why or why not?" Two out of three of the bishops in this study agreed that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church because women and men perceive positions of authority as male roles. On the other hand, one bishop stated that more and more women are pursuing and occupying previously dominated leadership positions. One hundred percent of the district superintendents/presiding elders agreed that men and/or women oppose

⁶¹ Teresa E. Snorton (Chaplain Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and Executive Director of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. at Emory), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Decatur, Georgia, 27 September 2007.

⁶² Berlinda A. Love (Elder African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Trenton, New Jersey, 17 October 2007.

female leadership in the church because of congregations' rejection of female leadership and the belief that it is not scriptural. One hundred percent of the pastors indicated that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church because both men and women are fearful of a woman having power and authority. Jealousy is also cited as a reason for its existence. Three out of five elders agreed that both men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church, citing jealousy, prejudice, and discrimination as motivation. One elder stated that she has a good rapport with men; however, she has encountered challenges with women who are accustomed to controlling the pastor. One elder did not respond to this question. Three out four chaplains in this study suggested that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church based on doctrines and beliefs that women can not or should not have authority over a man. On the other hand, one chaplain suggested that a determination cannot be made without some kind of quantifiable research. The scholar in this category stated that she will not generalize and say that all men oppose female leadership. However, she has experienced sexist treatment by both men and women. For example women's voices indicated the following:

Oh, absolutely yes. It has been my experience that there has been opposition from both males and females. I believe with regards to men there tends to be an unsettled, a sense of unsettledness, I guess, when it come to trying to protect certain positions. I have experienced and been told of certain levels of fear that women will "take over." There has been apprehension about women taking on leadership roles especially over men. With regard to women, a lot of it seems to be centered in historic roles, especially when you look in pastoral ministry. We are more accustomed to satisfying daddy, than we are of satisfying momma, especially in the black church. It was usually the place where women, no matter what their educational background, had a tendency to think their relationships with the male pastor made them feel like they were somebody. Especially if they were not getting that kind of attention at home they could get it at the church simply by baking a pie, or cooking a

cake, or being very, very kind. But, when it comes to women in the pulpit, most other women are apprehensive because we don't know how we're supposed to treat you historically. It seems also that there is a sense of dread, when it comes to having to . . . Let me go back. There also has been a sense of jealousy, because it seems that the women are more able to be comfortable receiving attention from the male clergy, but when it is reversed and men are receiving attention from female clergy there is unsettledness. . . ⁶³

Yes, it is true. Men and women oppose female leadership in the church. Both men and women in many instances verbally and adamantly express their beliefs and/or opinions in reference to female leadership in the church. Their thinking is that it is not scriptural. ⁶⁴

Thus, the following is a sample of comments in reference to factor two: socio-political-theological system. In answer to the question, "Do you agree that socio-political-theological systems exist in the church—why or why not?" One hundred percent of the bishops in this investigation suggested that socio-political-theological systems indeed exist in the church. Overall, the bishops expressed that clergywomen's movement to greater positions of authority in the church is stifled, and that clergywomen's access to larger churches is restricted to this system. One hundred percent of the district superintendents/presiding elders stated that socio-political-theological systems exist in the church; however, one district superintendent/presiding elder thinks that it is more political than theological or social; indicating that politics is more a factor when women pursue positions predominately occupied by males and that these behaviors are no different than those woman experiences in the secular world. Thirteen out of fourteen pastors in this category stated that socio-political-theological

⁶³ Regina Reese-Young (Pastor Calvary Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Buffalo, New York, 26 October 2007.

⁶⁴ Jane E. Thomas (Presiding Elder Macon/Barnesville District Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Gary, Indiana, 15 October 2007.

systems indeed exist in the church, citing traditionalism and the “good ole boy” system for its existence. One hundred percent of the elders in this research agreed that socio-political-theological systems exist in the church, citing nepotism and political power plays that maintain the status quo—male leadership. One hundred percent of the chaplains in this study implied that socio-political-theological systems exist in the church because women are being appointed to smaller churches and are sometimes overlooked in the ordination appointment process. Furthermore, the church structure is a mere reflection of what takes place in the world. The scholar in this study stated that there are dynamics that are social, political, and theological which determine the way decisions are made. For example women’s voices indicated the following:

They do exist in the church. My beliefs are based upon some of our rudiments or the very foundation of our church. When we look at what we call in the Methodist Church, the quadrilateral, which is the Wesleyan piece that we build our faith around which is scripture, experience, reason, and tradition. This make me think that definitely there is a problem when it comes to moving sisters along, or giving sisters the same job titles, the same monies, and the same positions in the church.⁶⁵

Yes, because the church mirrors the world. And some of the same systems that we find operating in the secular world we find operating in the church. There are those who think and act the same way in the church as they do in the secular world.⁶⁶

Plus, the following is a sample of comments relating to factor two: socio-political-theological-systems questions. In response to the question, “How have socio-political-theological systems impacted your ministerial career?” One hundred percent of the bishops in this study noted that socio-political-theological systems have impacted their

⁶⁵ Essies Clark George (Pastor Israel Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Gary, Indiana, 15 October 2007.

⁶⁶ Lillian Washington (District Superintendent Hartsville District United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recoding, Hartsville, South Carolina, 29 November 2007.

lives by preventing them from entering ministry earlier in life, and the expectation the women should work harder for less pay is also indicated as a reason. Two out of three of the district superintendents/presiding elders indicated that they have been impacted by socio-political-theological systems because inferiority exists in the church, but one district superintendent/presiding elder stated that these systems do not exist on a denominational level, but exist in some local churches. In addition, district superintendents/presiding elders cited that a lack of appreciation for women's gifts and graces are also reasons for these systems. Twelve out of fourteen pastors agreed that socio-political-theological systems impacted their ministerial careers and/or lives because of feelings of superiority, and the devaluing of women's gifts and graces. Two pastors stated that they have not been directly impacted by these systems while in the Methodist denomination. One hundred percent of the elders stated that socio-political-theological systems have indeed impacted their lives because of male control, and lower clergy salaries; however, one elder stated that the system made her learn how to maneuver her way through doors, so it actually worked to her advantage. One hundred percent of the chaplains suggested that socio-political-theological systems impacted their ministerial careers or lives for various reasons: (1) Multiple-appointments, (2) Appointment to smaller churches, (3) Difficulty accepting the call into ministry, and (4) Slow ordination process. The scholar in this research noted that socio-political-theological-systems have impacted her ministerial career or life because of a congregation's rejection of her leadership based on her race and gender. For example women's voices indicated:

I think once I made up my mind that I would accept the challenges of my call. I realized that I no longer need to try to defend that call. I was better

able to embrace that and go ahead and use the gifts and graces God gave me when I encounter situations where people are not as affirming or not as accepting, I do not get upset about that anymore. I try to avoid getting into these debates where I have to prove something. I am very much assured in the graces and the gifts that God has given me. I am very much assured in the call that God has placed on my life, and so I do not have a problem making that public and making that known. I just do not feel like I need to go to war about that anymore. . . ⁶⁷

I did not realize or come to know that we had a system that was so intense, until I began the ordination process . . . When it came to my own ordination process; it has been delayed time and time again, while I have watched my brothers come in at the same time that I did, progress and move on and become fully ordained almost three years before myself; as well as receive appointments without the requirements that are made of me such as my educational requirements: my ordination requirements. There have been a number of my brothers who have just bypassed a lot of those supposedly milestones; those places in the system that say that you have to pass this before you go to the next.⁶⁸

In addition, the following is a sample of the comments about factor three:

perceptions of inferiority. In reaction to the question, “Does inferiority exist in the church—why or why not?” One hundred percent of the bishops in this research stated that inferiority exists in the church because some women are inferior to men and some men are inferior to women. The bishops also stated that these systems exist because of a superiority complex. Two out of three district superintendents/presiding elders agreed that inferiority exist in the church because women’s gifts and graces are not valued; however, one district superintendent/presiding elder asserted that it exists not on a denominational level, but in some local churches. Twelve pastors agreed that inferiority exists in the church because of feelings of superiority, and a lack of appreciation of

⁶⁷ LaVerne Whitehead Reed (Pastor Richard Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Dallas, Texas, 15 October 2007.

⁶⁸ Joanne Bedford (Chaplain African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 10 November 2007.

women's gifts and graces. However, one pastor stated that it exists to a certain extent, but one pastor disagreed. One hundred percent of the elders in this study agreed that inferiority exists in the church due to jockeying for positions, and because of condescending statements. One hundred percent of the chaplains in this category indicated that inferiority exist in the church because of racism, exclusion or silencing of women, and lower clergy salaries. In addition, the chaplains stated that these same disparities are present in secular institutions. The scholar in this research stated that the biggest problem in the church is heterosexuality and the treatment of gays and lesbians. For example women's voices indicated the following:

Well, I think when people allow themselves to be boxed in by someone else's gender, geographical expectations, perceptions, and opinions. I think sure, sometimes people doubt their abilities and their gifts, and so they do not embrace them they allow themselves to take submissive roles and positions and believe themselves to be incapable or not qualified, and so they take a back seat. But, I think the only thing that we ought to be bound by is God's rules and regulations in our lives, not because some persons, particularly men, or some women believe that because of our gender, we should take a submissive role and just be dictated to and forget about what God calls us to do . . . God created all humans equal in his site. When we allow people to place that upon us that is how we become inferior. We cheat ourselves; we cheat God.⁶⁹

Well it does, but I am not so sure that it is limited to the church. I think that women still are being paid less than men, and yet we are still competitive as far as the quality and the quantity of our work But, I think we still receive less financial compensation than our male counterparts, even in the church. Now, there will be some who will be given large crumbs, whereas others will be given small crumbs. I think that works with women and men, but you see it more; I think it stands out perhaps more with women. What I mean by that is that I think that it is systemic

⁶⁹ Susie B.K. Twyman (Pastor New Victory Ministries Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, tape recording, Rome, Georgia, 10 October 2007.

and people don't necessarily know that they are doing it. Unless we take a stand to consciously bring it to their consciousness, it may continue.⁷⁰

Also, the following is a sample of comments about factor three: perception of inferiority. In reply to the question, "Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church—why or why not?" One hundred percent of the bishops indicated that inferiority plays a role in the existence of sexism in the church because sexism and inferiority coexist along with male domination. One hundred percent of the subjects in this district superintendents/presiding elders agreed that inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the church because men overlook or devalue women's gifts and graces. The superintendents/presiding elders implied that there are women in the church who help perpetuate inferiority because they believe that a woman's place is subordinate to her male counterpart. Thirteen out of fourteen pastors agreed that inferiority plays a role in the existence of sexism in the church because of males' feelings of superiority and male domination. Three elders in this study agreed that inferiority plays a role in the existence of sexism in the church because of traditionalism, and men who picture women in neutering roles or subordinate roles and men in leadership role. However, one elder stated that traditionalism plays a greater role in the existence of sexism in the church, and one elder replied that she did not know. Two out of four chaplains in this investigation agreed that inferiority does play a role in the existence of sexism, citing the following reasons: the "good ole boy" network that promotes unity among men and the exclusion of women in top level positions. One chaplain stated that sexism is the means by which we become inferior. Another chaplain stated that people have a tendency to perpetuate

⁷⁰ Cynthia V. Vaughn (Chaplain United Methodist Church and Coordinator of Pastoral Services at Wesleywood Center), interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 18 September 2007.

internalized views of others. The scholar in this study suggested that she does not know if inferiority plays a role in the existence of sexism in the church, and it is not a criteria she wants to give legitimacy to. However, she feels that there are prejudices that exist that consider certain people to be inferior. For example women's voices indicated the following:

Yes, it does because men are in control and they see women and devalue women. There is also a power issue that comes into play where they want to maintain a certain amount of power, so in order to do that they have to devalue women.⁷¹

Yes, I think it does for two reasons: (1) there are men and there are people who are in positions of authority who devalue and see women as inferior, (2) there are also women because of the system we have grown up in and we have had to be a part of, often find themselves feeling that they are inferior, because they have been told that, and that has been the thought that has been placed in their minds. Women need to get rid of that kind of mindset.⁷²

Likewise, the following is a sample of comments about factor four: the interpretation of scripture. In reply to the question, "What scriptures, if any, are used to support the ordination and/or women being ministers," the bishops in this study cited the Pauline scriptures, 1 Timothy 2:12 and any scripture which is non-inclusive can be used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. The district superintendents / presiding elders quoted 1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy 2:11-12, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:22-24, and 1 Timothy 3:12, as scriptures used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. Pastors cited 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-13, Titus 2:3-5, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and 1 Peter

⁷¹ Alexia Scott-Ford (Pastor Saint James African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Orange Park, Florida, 16 November 2007.

⁷² Violet L. Fisher (Bishop North Central and Western New York Episcopal District United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Rochester, New York, 19 October 2007

3:7, as the scriptures that are used to perpetuate sexism in the church. The elders in this investigation stated that the Pauline scriptures, Genesis Chapters 1&2, 1 Timothy 2:11-14, and 1 Timothy 3:12 are scriptures that are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. The chaplains quoted the books of Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Genesis as texts that perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. The scholar in this study said "The scripture that states that wives should obey their husbands" is a text that perpetuates sexism in the church. For example women's voice indicated the following:

I believe that in Matthew when Jesus rose from the dead on that Sunday morning when he sent Mary to tell the disciples to wait that he will come there. Also, in Matthew when he said go forth and make disciples, he is only talking to the men, but he was talking to all of them, that we are to go forth; we all are in ministry.⁷³

. . . I don't know of any scriptures that actually speak of women's ordination but, there are many scriptures that support women in leadership roles and women as ministers. We can start with the book of Genesis 1:27-28 where it talks about dominion being given to both men and women. We can talk about Acts 21:9 where women prophesy spoke the word of the Lord in the early church. There are several references in the book of Acts. We can go to Acts 2:8-9 where Phillip the evangelist had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. We can look at Acts 9:36 where Tabitha is called a disciple who was always doing good and helping the poor. We can look at Galatians 3:28 where full equality is restated as a basic principal of our relationship in Christ. I just wanted to mention that in the Old Testament several women were prophetesses; serving as the voice of God and instruction and leading men and some of those women were Miriam and Deborah. In Joel, which is one of my favorite scripture references, 2:28-29, the prophet Joel predicted that in the coming age the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon the women and men alike and that they would prophecy. On the day of Pentecost we know that Peter declared that this was now being fulfilled and this is recorded in Acts 2:16-18. . . . I will quote Romans 16:1-2 where Paul refers to Phoebe as a

⁷³ Blondell Miller (Pastor Rock Springs and Saint Peters United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Hartsville, South Carolina, 27 November 2007.

deacon, not a deaconess, but a deacon and she is commended for being a great help to him; he asked that she be received as a saint. . . ⁷⁴

In any event, the following is a sample of comments about factor four: the interpretations of scripture. In answer to the question, “What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church,” the bishops in this research cited the Pauline scriptures, 1 Timothy 2:12 and any scripture which is non-inclusive and can be used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. The district superintendents / presiding elders quoted 1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy 2:11-12, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:22-24, and 1 Timothy 3:12, as scriptures used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. Pastors cited 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-13, Titus 2:3-5, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and 1 Peter 3:7, as the scriptures that are used to perpetuate sexism in the church. The elders stated that the Pauline scriptures, Genesis Chapters 1&2, 1 Timothy 2:11-14, and 1 Timothy 3:12 are scriptures that are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. The chaplains quoted the books of Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Genesis as text that perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. The scholar in this study said “the scripture that states that wives should obey their husbands” is a text that perpetuates sexism in the church. For example women’s voices indicated the following:

1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 11:3; and Ephesians 5:22-24 are scriptures that are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the church. ⁷⁵

Two of the scriptures that come to my mind are 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Peter 3:7. I think both of those specifically speak to

⁷⁴ Berlinda A. Love (Elder African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Trenton, New Jersey, 17 October 2007.

⁷⁵ Jane E. Thoman (Presiding Elder Macon/Barnesville Episcopal District Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, tape recording, 08 November 2007.

women being weaker than men. So, I think that those are two that people like to use, or use out of context, when they want to say that women are not to be in those positions.⁷⁶

So consequently, the following is a sample of comments about factor five: slow ordination process or denial question. In response to the question, “What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination,” two of the bishops in this study stated that they did not experience any challenges with pursuing ordination; however, one bishop indicated that she experienced discrimination. Two out of three district superintendents / presiding elders stated that they had experienced challenges with pursuing ordination, citing sexist attitudes and slow ordination process as the reasons for their difficulties. One district superintendent/presiding elder stated that she had no challenges because she followed the outlined Bishops Course of Study. Five out of fourteen pastors implied that they did not encounter any challenges in pursuing ordination. On the other hand, nine pastors suggested that they did encounter challenges in pursuing ordination for the following reasons: (1) Rejection or disapproval of female leadership, (2) Slow ordination process, (3) Sexist environment, and (4) Perceived indifferences. Two elders in this research indicated that they did not have any challenges with pursuing ordination; however, three stated that they had indeed experienced challenges indicating that favoritism and woman’s inhumanity to woman (women’s opposition to female leadership) were the reasons behind their challenges. In addition, one elder stated that her family has been a part of the Methodist denomination for generations, and that she had no challenges. One chaplain did not directly address the questions. Two chaplains

⁷⁶ Susie K.B. Twyman (Pastor New Victory Ministries Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, tape recording, Rome, Georgia, 10 October 2007.

indicated they did not have any challenges with pursuing ordination— one chaplain stated that she and her family have generational roots within Methodism, but she has proven her commitment to the denomination. One chaplain stated that she has indeed encountered challenges with pursuing ordination. The scholar in this study stated that she did experience challenges with pursuing ordination because someone in leadership tried to discourage her from becoming an ordained minister. For example women's voices indicated the following:

Well, when I first went to my pastor; I was a student in seminary. My pastor said that I was just confused because I was in seminary, and that I really did not want to be a woman preacher. That what I needed to do was to leave the seminary where I was and go to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary because that school did that embrace women preachers. Therefore, if I went there I would be directed into a study for women, which would be more like counseling and education . . . So, I didn't say anything for a while, and I went on and I tried to talk to him again about it. He said to me that there were not going to be any women in the pulpit. Then I realized that I needed to be out of that environment for a while. . . . So, in my search, that is how I got to the AME church . . . I came into the AME church in October of '93, right before my graduation. So, the way the ordination happened in the AME church was very interesting because normally you go through a process, a 5-year process, but the Bishop accepted my ordination from the Baptist church and allowed me to come in as a Deacon. I was accepted and ordained an Itinerate elder. . . ⁷⁷

Initially I was told that I had to go the long way through ordination, and that I wouldn't be ordained for like a long time, like many, many years after I entered the ministry. Then I changed churches and I didn't have any problems, whatsoever. So, basically when I first started I was at a church, and then I left that church; not because of the pastor, but because I had a better opportunity to provide ministry at another church. Therefore that pastor was very, very gracious to me, but initially the first pastor said I had to go the long route.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ LaVerne Whitehead Reed (Pastor Richard Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Dallas, Texas, 15 October 2007.

⁷⁸ Val Jackson (Pastor Livingston Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Locust Grove, Georgia, 05 October 2007.

Furthermore, the following is a sample of the comments relating to factor five: slow ordination process or denial. In retort to the question, “In what stages of your career did you seek ordination and why,” the bishops in this investigation decided to pursue ordination once they received their call into ministry and/or after they had completed seminary. The district superintendents / presiding elders decided to seek ordination while in seminary, or after being rejected by another denomination. The pastors in this study decided to pursue ordination for various reasons: (1) After they completed seminary, (2) After they received their call into ministry, (3) So they could have a voice in the Conference, and/or (4) they were already involved in ministries, such as music, youth, and/or administrative ministry. The chaplains decided to seek ordination after they received their call into ministry, during their 40s, and/or after they left corporate America. The scholar in this research decided to be a minister when she was fifteen years old. She noted that she had clergy leaders who were good role models. For example women’s voices indicated the following:

I didn’t necessarily seek ordination. It was just something that just happened. I just believe that it was God ordained. Just like in the book of Jeremiah; Jeremiah says that, “I ordained you even in the womb,” so, with that being said, I just believed that it was God ordained. It was nothing that I just wanted to do. It is just something that happened, but the only two problems that I have had are those from colleagues.⁷⁹

I sought ordination in 1977 when I was an evangelist. . . . I ran across an AME woman, who was a pastor, and at that time I had never met any woman pastor . . . In 1977, I found out that I could be an ordained minister. However, it was 1998 when I began attending the Interdenominational Theological Seminary.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Leticia Jackson Douglas (Pastor Servants of Christ Ministries Christian Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 08 September 2007.

⁸⁰ Althea M. Brown (Elder African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Novi, Michigan, 08 November 2007.

Again, the following is a sample of the comments about factor six: the appointment process and/or clergywomen's appointment to smaller churches. In rejoinder to the question, "Do you have equal access to all leadership roles in the church—why or why not?" One hundred percent of the bishops believe they have access to all leadership roles in the church because they have worked hard and walked in humility. One district superintendent/presiding elder in this study stated that she does have equal access to all leadership roles in the church because someone in leadership recognized and affirmed her gifts and graces. On the contrary, two district superintendents/presiding elders stated that they do not have equal access because of sexism and stated that women who gain access have to maneuver their way in the door or above the glass ceiling. Five of the pastors stated that they have access to leadership roles in the church because equal access is available but it is not without its challenges. Seven pastors agreed that they do not have equal access to all leadership roles in the church for various reasons, such as lack of favor with existing leadership, perception of inferiority, and lack of support. Two pastors stated that they are not sure if they have equal access because they have never pursued upper level positions. Four elders agreed that women do not have equal access to all leadership roles in the church for various reasons, such as women are not a part of the "good ole boy" system, and rejection of female leadership. On the other hand, one elder stated that women do have equal access to all leadership roles in the church because there are women in all leadership roles in the church. One chaplain in this study indicated that women have equal access to all leadership roles in the church because there is really no prohibition of female leadership. One chaplain indicated that she is supposed to have

equal access but the “good ole boy” system unites and makes decision that do not include women. Two chaplains stated that women does not have equal access because women do not have equal access to larger churches, and one chaplain stated there are no women bishops in her denomination. The scholar in this category stated that this question do not apply to her because she is a seminary pastor. For example women’s voices indicated the following:

We do now, in the African Methodist Church. Unfortunately, not in all of the church. Until my sisters in AME Zion and the CME and other denominations also have access, then women don’t have full access.⁸¹

I do not believe that clergywomen, black or white, have equal access. Access is a funny thing. Just because there is a slot there, doesn’t mean you might be as qualified as the next person. But, if you are not a part of the good ole boy system; if you haven’t been groomed by the right person; if you haven’t met the external criteria that some people establish for a position, they are not going to give it to you. It is just as simple as that. It was 1984 before an African American woman was ordained as a Bishop in the United Methodist Church. So, there are lots of times where we are not given equal access.⁸²

So, the following is a sample of comments relating to factor six: the appointment process and/or clergywomen’s appointment to smaller churches. In reply to the question, “Do you think women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the church—why or why not?” One hundred percent of the bishops in this research agreed that women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the church because women are seminary trained and they have prepared themselves for the task. One hundred percent of the district superintendents / presiding elders agreed that women are capable of fulfilling all

⁸¹ Carolyn Tyler Guidry (Bishop 16th Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, tape recording, Los Angeles, California, 20 September 2007.

⁸² Maxine Allen (Elder United Methodist Church and Minister of Mission and Ethnic Ministries Arkansas Conference), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Little Rock, Arkansas, 18 November 2007.

leadership roles in the church because they are strong visionaries, they are educated, and women have proven they can lead. One hundred percent of the pastors agreed that women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the church for several reasons: (1) They have the skills, (2) They are sincere and genuine, (3) They are educated, and (4) God is the qualifier. One hundred percent of the elders agreed that women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the church because they are qualified, they have the necessary gifts and graces, and they are educated and trained. One hundred percent of the chaplains agreed that women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the church because they are prepared. They have demonstrated that they possess the leadership skills, and they have the necessary gifts and graces. The chaplain in this study stated that women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the church because women possess gifts and graces, strengths and weaknesses equally as men do and should be considered with equal criteria. For example women's voices indicated the following:

Oh, of course. You know women have already demonstrated their ability to function competently in virtually every other segment of society even in professions where they were previously locked out from because of historical tradition. I certainly think that's true in the church. There are women who possess the skills that I think are necessary to be leaders at the church at every level.⁸³

Yes, women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles, and certainly should be given an equal opportunity to do so because women as well as men; I just believe that women are equal to men; that women possess gifts and graces and failures and weaknesses and strengths equally as men do and should be considered with equal criteria. I don't believe that because someone is a woman she deserves to have a leadership position only because she is a woman. I believe that because she is a woman she deserves an equal opportunity and equal consideration

⁸³ Teresa E. Snorton (Chaplain Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and Executive Director of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. at Emory), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Decatur, Georgia, 27 September 2007.

alongside of her male peers. And if she doesn't have the qualifications then she shouldn't be chosen for whatever leadership opportunity.⁸⁴

Likewise, the following sample represents comments about factor six: the appointment process and/or clergywomen's appointment to smaller churches. In reply to the question, "In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?" The bishops in this study stated that women sometimes encounter the "good ole boy" system that is designed to restrict the elevation of women in the church. The district superintendents/presiding elders noted that clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process because of congregation's rejection of female leadership, and not knowing the right people. The pastors suggested that clergywomen's experience sexism during the appointment process in the following ways: (1) Lower clergy salaries, (2) Smaller churches, (3) Long commutes to and from assigned churches, (4) Ordination denial, meaning they could be admitted to trial but not ordained, (5) Slow ordination process, and (6) Rejection of female leadership. Elders indicated that clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process because of congregational rejection of female leadership. The chaplains strongly implied that they experience sexism during the appointment process because of men's perceived fear that church membership will decline if a woman is appointed as the pastor, and women are being appointed to smaller churches. The scholar in this research stated that this question does not apply to her. For example women's voices indicated the following:

The "good old buddy system" still exists in some places. There is less of it now than there was in the past. With more women in key leadership

⁸⁴ Traci West (Elder United Methodist Church and Associate Professor of Ethics and African-American Studies Drew University), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Madison, New Jersey, 21 November 2007.

positions of the church and doing very excellently, more and more person are looking for the 'best' person for the position versus looking to promote their friends.⁸⁵

I feel that we do experience sexism because often our counterparts that do the appointments are our brother. So, it appears that the positions with higher pay are usually given to their brothers first. And also it's been difficult for the African-American clergy female to be appointed to cross-racial appointments, and I think this is because of sexism also.⁸⁶

Then, the following sample comments are about factor seven: lower clergy salaries. In answer to the question, "Is it true that clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen—why or why not," one bishop stated that she doesn't know for certain whether or not clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen; however, if it is true it works like it does in the corporate world. One bishop stated that it does not exist where she is bishop. One bishop stated that clergywomen are being placed in smaller churches and are receiving lower salaries. Two district superintendents / presiding elders indicated that clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen because they are oftentimes appointed to smaller churches where the salaries are lower. One district superintendent / presiding elder stated that she was not certain if clergywomen receive lower salaries, but she has witnessed female preachers receiving lower pay for speaking engagements. Thirteen out of fourteen pastors agreed that clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen for several reasons: (1) The appointment to smaller churches, (2) Women are not considered the sole provider of a household; therefore, she can afford to receive a lower salary, (3) The appointment to mission churches where there could be no salary

⁸⁵ Sarah France Taylor Davis (Presiding prelate of 18th Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church), interview by author, written notes, Lesotho, South Africa, 04 November 2007.

⁸⁶ Blondell Miller (Pastor Rock Springs and Saint Peters United Methodist Church), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Hartsville, South Carolina, 27 November 2007.

offered, and (4) The perception that single women and/or women without children do not need the same salary as clergymen. However, one pastor stated that does not happen in the UMC because men and women are supposed to be equal. Three elders stated that clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen because they are appointed to smaller churches. One elder stated that according to the “General Board of Higher Education Salary Study”, a recent publication, European-American clergywomen receive higher salaries than African-American clergywomen, and African-American clergymen receive higher salaries than African-American clergywomen. Nonetheless, this same disparity mirrors those in the corporate world. Two elders in this category stated that they were not sure if clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen because they have not read any concrete information confirming this allegation. Two out of four chaplains in this category agreed that clergywomen receive lower salaries because they are appointed to smaller churches that cannot afford to pay much money. Two chaplains in this category stated that they did not know if clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen because they have not seen any research on this topic. The scholar in this research stated that she believe that clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen, but do not have statistical data to prove it. For example women’s voices indicated the following:

Yes, it’s true. Have you read *The General Board of Higher Ed Salary Study for African American Clergywomen*? It was published last year, and it is on the website now. Yes, clergywomen in the United Methodist church, just as in the secular world, receive lower salaries then their male counterparts. White clergywomen of course receive a higher salary than African American clergywomen. African American clergymen receive

more money than African American clergywomen. So, just like it is in the secular world, you see the same salary disparity in working with clergy.⁸⁷

I think in a general sense certainly there are individual exceptions to the rule; but broadly I think it's for the reason that I just mentioned that clergywomen tend to get appointed to the smaller churches that can't afford to pay much money and men get the bigger churches where they can pay a lot of money.⁸⁸

Finally, the following sample comments relate to factor seven: lower clergy salaries. In response to the question, "Do you think clergywomen should earn the same salary as clergymen—why or why not?" One hundred percent of the bishops stated that women should earn the same salary as clergymen because the same services are being provided by both genders. One hundred percent of the district superintendents/presiding elders in this category agreed that clergywomen should earn the same salary as clergymen because they do the same job and they work just as hard, if not harder. One hundred percent of the pastors agreed that clergywomen should earn the same salary as clergymen for various reasons: (1) Equal work should generate equal pay, and (2) Salary should be based on qualifications. One hundred percent of the elders agreed that clergywomen should receive the same salary as clergymen because women are multi-tasked; clergywomen who have the same education and leadership abilities and skills should be treated as professionally trained individuals who deserve the same salary as clergymen. One hundred percent of the chaplains agreed that clergywomen should earn the same salary as clergymen because equal work and the same experiences should lead up to equal pay. The scholar in this investigation agreed that women should receive the

⁸⁷ Maxine Allen (Elder United Methodist Church and Minister of Mission and Ethnic Ministries Arkansas Conference), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Little Rock, Arkansas, 18 November 2007.

⁸⁸ Bridgette Young (Chaplain United Methodist Church and Associate Dean Chapel of Religious Life at Emory University), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 04 October 2007.

same salary as clergymen because they should be treated as equal to clergymen. For example women's voices indicated the following:

Absolutely, clergywomen are doing the same work as clergymen. There should not be a distinction between the types of charges or the types of appointments they are given. They should have equal opportunities to the same things, and I guess that is one of those things that I believe needs to be put in place in the AME church, that it become a guaranteed salary based on the types of charges or levels of charges and that everybody be able to receive the same thing. Oftentimes, women are appointed to a charge and when they get there, the Board of Stewards and Finance Committee have restructured the salary so that the woman receives less than an ample a package compared to what her predecessor or male may have been.⁸⁹

I think that there needs to be equity; and how the church figures out equity is another whole issue. But I don't think whether someone is a man, or a woman should make a difference as to what salary they make. I think the differential has to be based on other factors, but of course women should earn the same as men for doing the same job.⁹⁰

In essence, 100 percent of the participants in this study agreed that sexism is the differencing value of one sex; in this case, men have preferential treatment over women. In addition, more than 90 percent of the participants in this study agreed that the following factors influence sexism in the church: (1) Men and/or women's opposition to female leadership in the church, (2) The interpretation of scripture, (3) The appointment process or appointment to smaller churches, (4) Lower clergy salaries, (5) Slow ordination process or denial, (6) Perception of inferiority, and (7) Socio-political-theological systems. The participants also concluded that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and

⁸⁹ Joanne Bedford (Chaplain African Methodist Episcopal Church), telephone interview by author, Atlanta, Georgia, 10 November 2007.

⁹⁰ Bridgette Young (Chaplain United Methodist Church and Associate Dean Chapel of Religious Life at Emory University), telephone interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Georgia, 04 October 2007.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 are scriptures used to validate the subordination of women in the church. Based on the research one can conclude that in almost every human endeavor, the impact of sexism is an atrocity.

In conclusion, woman's inhumanity to woman (women's opposition to female leadership) appears to be most inhumane of all the dynamics impacting women in leadership roles. However, more disappointing is women's lack of support for other women. This study also indicates that women who are highly educated are more likely to accept female leadership. However, if the barriers that separate women from one another prevent women from seeing the "truth" of our common lives, lies, and struggles; then we must first remove those barriers that separate us—feminist from non-feminist, womanist from non-womanist, liberal from conservative, and whites from blacks. The women's movement was about women coming together to give one another strength to accomplish what they were denied to pursue—roles as bishops, presidents of the United States of America, and other influential leadership roles/positions. These are non-traditional roles that women have partially been excluded from pursuing in times past.

One of the most challenging realities to accept is that women themselves can and have erected barriers for other women. It is sometimes difficult to convince all women there is a need for equality between the sexes. Furthermore, it is crucial that women start overturning the barriers that separate them. It is evident that classism, racism, and sexism separate humanity in general. If women are to conquer these barriers they must set aside issues that divide them: (1) Negative perceptions about female leadership; such as, it is not scriptural for women to lead, (2) The devaluing of women's gifts and graces; such as,

women can not and should have authority over a man, and (3) The “traditional” belief that certain roles or positions should be reserved for males only.

Women’s exclusion from leadership or even limited visibility imposed on them in the name of traditional religion has lasted for many centuries. Today, it appears as if the silence is being broken as decision-making positions are being granted to clergywomen. Clergywomen’s pursuit of the office of Elder, Presiding Elder (AME/CME), District Superintendent, Pastor, Chaplain, and Bishop screams no more silence as women unite (theologians, historians, liberals, high school dropouts, blacks, and whites) and proclaim a shout of victory instead of a retreat. The silence will be broken so that everyone may have equal access to decision-making positions within the church and society. Women are screaming no to being restricted to an inferior place because of class, race, and sex. Therefore, women are pursuing positions they have been denied for centuries.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research analyzed the impact of sexism on African-American women ministers in selected Methodist denominations. This research utilized the case study methodology to examine the impact of sexism on thirty African-American women ministers in Methodism between 1980-2000. For this study, sexism is the differential valuing of one sex; in this case, men are given preferential treatment over women. In light of this definition, this investigation strived to determine why sexism exists in selected Methodist churches. Furthermore, the research questions were (1) What factors have contributed to an increase in women's responses to sexism in the Methodist church, (2) What challenges confront women in their pursuit of ordination, and (3) What are clergywomen's perceptions of male leadership attitudes towards female leadership in the church? Results of the research indicated that the following seven factors: (1) Socio-political-theological systems, (2) Perception of inferiority, (3) Interpretation of scripture, (4) Slow ordination process or denial, (5) The appointment process or appointment to smaller churches, (6) Lower clergy salaries, and (7) Women and/or men's opposition to female leadership were experienced at various levels by clergywomen. Moreover, the literature review indicated that an increasingly large number of women are pursuing ordination and other traditionally male-dominated careers.

Research strongly suggested that women who are embracing this “new perspective” are usually college and/or seminary educated.¹

The literature review indicated that women who pursue ministry as a career are confronted with the following: (1) Slow ordination process or denial, (2) Men and/or women’s opposition to female leadership in the church, (3) Lower clergy salaries, (4) The appointment process or appointment to smaller churches, (5) Socio-political-theological systems, such as clergywomen’s disapproval of hierarchal forms of church polity, and (6) Interpretation of scripture or the study of God in general. Certainly, the research findings are similar to the recurring factors that are indicated in the literature review. However, the perceptions of inferiority were not a recurring factor indicated in the literature review. The conclusion drawn from these findings suggest that the social implications influencing sexism in the church are primarily laced in traditionalism.

The conceptual framework implied that there are social, political, and theological implications that contribute to black sexual politics. Seemingly, the social images, beliefs, and values which are based on their personal life experience made women more determined to secure justice, financial equity, and equality between the sexes in America in the 1980s. The traditional hierarchal structures had to be made more flexible to adapt to women’s need for inclusiveness in secular and sacred institutions. It is a general consensus that African-American women experience a triad of racism, classism, and sexism. It could be stated that women from other denominations do not share the same

¹ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 75-99.

challenges or perception as those from Methodist denominations. Nevertheless, many women in this study agreed that sexism exists within the churches.

Research indicated that the social implications influencing sexism in the church are primarily rooted in traditionalism. Traditionally, men have dominated decision-making-positions such as Bishop, District Superintendent/Presiding Elder, Pastor, Elder, Chaplain, and scholar. In other words, the perpetuation of existing beliefs, practices, behaviors, and social custom, are restricting clergywomen's economic, political, and social (power) influence. This type of jockeying for positions of greater power is also mirrored in secular institutions. This type of social foundation is being seriously impacted by women's increasing pursuit of non-traditional careers.

In addition, research indicated that the political implications influencing sexism in the church stem from the governing structure of the church which is the church hierarchy. This system involves men and women who either consciously or subconsciously restrict the inclusiveness of women in leadership roles in an effort to maintain male power. In doing so, women are being assigned to smaller or mission parishes where there are fewer members and lower salaries. This same system limits the number of women in decision-making positions such as Bishops, District Superintendents, and Presiding Elders; thus silencing women in an arena where their voice could make significant difference in terms of making and amending church policies and doctrines. The formation of African-American Methodist denominations brought with them persisting masculine domination in the form of sexual politics. Therefore, women have encountered challenges in terms of gaining ordination and decision-making

positions. In 1956, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States joined the mainline churches in recognizing and affirming the vocation of clergywomen. By the 1970s, it appears that the doors of opportunity started opening for Methodist women desiring to serve as clergy.² Today, some men have assumed the responsibility of hiring or appointing women in various levels of ministry. In contrast, some males and females are opposed to women in ministry, and agree that only men can lead since Christ had only male disciples.³

Research also indicated that the theological implications influencing sexism in the church stem from the persistent perpetuation of masculine domination that utilizes the Bible to justify derogatory and condescending behaviors and attitudes towards women in leadership positions. People have a history in misinterpreting the following scriptures to justify their actions, such as (1) 1 Corinthians 14-34-35 where it is stated:

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission as the Scripture says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it's is disgraceful for women to speak in the church,⁴ (2) 2 Timothy 2:11-12 where it is stated: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a women to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent,"⁵ and (3) 1 Timothy 3:2-3 where it is stated: "Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable,

² Grant S. Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 50-53.

³ Catherine Wessinger, *Religious Institutions and Women's Leadership: New Roles Inside the Mainstream* (Columbia: University of Carolina Press, 1996), 163-175.

⁴ *The New International / King James Version Parallel Bible* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1985), 1429.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1475.

hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.”⁶

In terms of the research question, “What factors have contributed to an increase in women’s response to sexism in the Methodist Church,” all thirty participants in this study indicated that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church for the following reasons: (1) Perception of inferiority, such as the pulpit is a place for males only, (2) Misinterpretation of scripture(s) that are used to validate the devaluing of female leadership authority, and (3) The traditional culture of the church prefers male leadership. These types of factors create a challenging environment in which women are being restricted or denied elevation into various positions within the church at the level/rate of clergymen. Therefore, clergywomen are receiving lower salaries and appointments which oftentimes contribute to lower clergy salaries. As a response to religious sexism, clergywomen are sharing their experiences in hopes that yokes of these injustices cease to exist.

In terms of the research question, “What challenges confront women in their pursuit of ordination,” eighteen of the clergywomen in this study implied they did experience challenges with pursuing ordination, citing the following reasons: (1) Rejection or disapproval of female leadership, (2) Slow ordination process or denial, (3) Perceived indifferences, and (4) Sexist attitudes/behavior. However, twelve participants stated that they did not have any challenges with pursuing ordination, and one participant did not directly address the question. Research indicated that many of the

⁶ Ibid., 1475.

women in this study pursued ministry as a second career, once they were already involved in ministry, after they graduated from seminary, and/or to have a voice in the conference.

Also, women's challenges with pursuing ordination indicated that sexism exists in the church. For example, mainstream African-American denominations are predominately female; however, a large male leadership persists. Nonetheless, African-American women serve in roles in black churches as secretaries, counselors, and Sunday school teachers. In contrast, unlicensed preaching women, including African-American women of the mid 1950s began aggressively pursuing ministerial careers through full ordination.⁷ Their quest for equality in the church on all levels is leading some of them to United Methodist and Presbyterian denominations that have rapidly included women on all levels of ministry since the 1980s. Nonetheless, women continue to struggle to advance beyond entry level positions within the church.⁸

In terms of the research question, "What are clergywomen's perceptions of male leadership attitudes toward female leadership in the church," twenty-seven out of thirty subjects that participated in this study stated that it is true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the church for two primary reasons: (1) Perceptions of inferiority—some men are fearful that women will gain the power and authority they have exercised for centuries. On the other hand, some women who are accustomed to male leadership in the church do not want change in terms of submitting to female leadership authority, and

⁷ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 276-297.

⁸ Ibid., 298-299.

(2) Feelings of superiority—some males think that leadership roles should be occupied by men only, and they use the Bible to justify why they feel a woman should not have authority over a man.

Many women have stepped out of their traditional roles into non-traditional leadership roles in both the secular and sacred worlds. Women are entering ordained leadership roles in large numbers. However, this new leadership access is not a reality in every religious denomination, nor has it eliminated women's encounter(s) with sexism. Also, twentieth century women in America continue to experience domestic violence, ecological disasters, and resistance to change from men and women alike. A case in point: A hierarchal structure is still common place in some sacred institutions.⁹ Nevertheless, African-American women ministers increased representation in leadership roles in general is proof that the factors that contributed to women's responses to sexism in the Methodist church, and the challenges that confront women when they pursue ordination, as well as clergywomen's perception of male leadership attitudes towards female leadership in the church, will no longer be factors because some women dared to be silent no more and tell the "truth." Recall the words of Sojourner Truth:

My name is Isabella; but when I left the house of bondage, I left everything behind. I wa'nt goin' to keep nothin' of Egypt on me, an' so I went to the Lord an' asked him to give me a new name. And the Lord gave me Sojourner, because I was to travel up an' down the land, shown' the people their sins, an' bein' a sign unto them. Afterward I told the Lord I wanted another name, 'cause everybody else had two names; and Lord gave me Truth, because I was to declare the truth to the people.¹⁰

⁹ Susan Hill Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place: A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 407-408.

¹⁰ Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 229.

In conclusion, this research was conducted to examine the impact of sexism on African-American women ministers in general, and African-American women ministers in Methodism in particular. In doing so, it has given some clergywomen a voice to declare their perceptions of the “truth” as it relates to religious sexism. Perhaps, the “truth” as it is perceived in this study will bring about a revolution that will transform many lives. Like Truth, the women in this study refused to be silent.

Future Recommendations

Therefore, for this study, the following recommendations are listed below: follow-up studies that will examine in detail the voices/perceptions of all women and men. A recommendation/study of this kind could lead to a dialogue between both genders as well as those who openly oppose female leadership in the church. This type of research could lead to a study or dialogue that is more inclusive.

Thus, a study or dialogue on the exegesis (the critical explanation or analysis of text) of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12, and/or 1 Timothy 3:23 could be beneficial in identifying the differences of scripture interpretation. Furthermore, this dialogue could lead to discussions on various laws, policies, doctrines, and sacred and perhaps secular texts that are used to restrict or deny women equal access to all positions within denominations, organizations, corporations, and all other institutions.

In addition, a study that examines in detail the perceptions of women in corporate America or the workplace in general could be a contribution to the humanities. A study of this kind could possibly unearth what factors influence sexism in the workplace and

how these factors impact women in leadership roles, as well as women who are pursuing leadership roles.

Finally, a conference or seminar could be instituted to allow an open dialogue between the sexes on the topic-the impact of sexism on clergywomen. This dialogue could be used to discover if the seven factors that influence sexism in selected Methodist denominations in this study cross denominational lines and cultures. This type of dialogue could also lead to further research on the impact of sexism on women in sacred as well as secular institutions regardless of ethnicity.

APPENDIX A

Telephone Interview Script

Hello, this is Latangela L.Coleman-Crossfield, may I speak to Rev._____.
Hi, Rev. _____, I am a doctoral candidate at Clark Atlanta University whose major is Humanities / African-American Studies. Now that I have completed my course work, I am compiling research for my dissertation: The Impact of Sexism on African-American Women Minister in Selected Branches of Methodism As Perceived By Clergywomen: 1980-2000. You have been chosen to be apart of this research project. Therefore, if you are interested, please confirm your participation by completing and signing the consent form you received at least one week prior to this telephone call and return it to me at 3457 Oak Run Drive, Lithonia, Georgia 30038.

Also, if you are interested in participating in this research now, please note that it will take at least one hour to complete. Otherwise, we could arrange a date and time that is convenient for you. Before we began the interview process, please note the following information:

Interview Information

- You will be one of thirty randomly selected women ministers from within Methodism.
- Your interview will take approximately one hour.
- You will be asked questions about your background, your education, your career, and your thoughts on sexism within the Church.
- Your interview will be audio taped. A transcript will be made from the tape.

Your risks and benefits

- You may find that people may disagree with some of your opinions or your interpretation of terms, scripture, as well as historical events. This could include family members or members of the general public.
- You may have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping preserve the history of African-American women ministers. You may also gain some public recognition for your participation in this study.

Appendix A (continued)

Your Rights

This project is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. You may stop your participation at any time during the interview. If you do not want to be identified, we will assign you a number and you will be asked specific questions about the identification of your parents and relatives. Your contact information such as address and telephone number will not be disclosed to the public. If you choose not to participate it will not affect your relationship with Clark Atlanta University.

Deposit of Materials

- You will agree to have the final edited transcript stored at Woodruff Library. You will sign a release and consent form before this can be done. The transcript will be available for use by researchers, teachers, students, or other members of the public. Their results may be displayed publicly or published. The materials may also be used for public display or publication by Latangela L. Coleman-Crossfield or Clark Atlanta University.
- You will agree to have a copy of the final transcript given to the Woodruff Library. You will have to sign a release form before this can be done. This will be available for researchers, teachers, students, or other members of the public. Their results may not be published, duplicated, or displayed without written permission of Clark Atlanta University.
- You will be asked to agree to have the original audio tape stored at the Woodruff Library. You will have to sign a release form before this can be done. The audio tape may be available for use by researchers, teachers, students, or other members of the public. Their results may be displayed publicly or published. Also, if you choose not to have your audio tape deposited in Woodruff Library, please state this request on your consent form.

Now that we have completed the preliminary information, may we begin the interview process?

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Biographical Sketch:

1. What is your full name?
2. What is your official job title and occupation?
3. What degrees have you earned and what institutions are they from?
4. What was your previous occupation?
5. What were your childhood aspirations?
6. What are your current or future aspirations?

Ministerial / Scholar Questions

1. What is Sexism?
2. Do you think sexism exists in the Church – why or why not?
3. Is it true that men and/or women oppose female leadership in the Church – why or why not?

In this research, a socio-political-theological system is defined as systems that relate to or involves factors which impact religious beliefs, religious teachings, and religious institutions. In addition, socio-political-theological systems usually control the elevation of women in the Church, thus controlling women's socio-political-economic status and political influence. Based on this definition, answer the following questions:

4. Do you agree that socio-political-theological systems exist in the Church – why or why not?
5. How has socio-political-theological systems impacted your ministerial career and/or life?

In this study inferiority is defined as the quality of being at a competitive disadvantage or in an unfavorable position and/or being devalued. Based on this definition, answer the following questions:

6. Does inferiority exist in the Church – why or why not?

Appendix B (continued)

7. Does inferiority play a role in the existence of sexism in the Church – why or why not?
8. What scriptures, if any, are used to perpetuate sexist attitudes in the Church?
9. What scripture, if any, support the ordination and/or women being ministers?
10. What challenges, if any, did you experience with pursuing ordination?
11. In what stages in your career did you seek ordination and why?
12. Do you have equal access to all leadership roles in the Church – why or why not?
13. Do you think women are capable of fulfilling all leadership roles in the Church – why or why not?
14. In what ways, if any, do clergywomen experience sexism during the appointment process?
15. Is it true that clergywomen receive lower salaries than clergymen – why or why not?
16. Do you think clergywomen should earn the same salary as clergymen – why or why not?

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

**Clark Atlanta University
Atlanta, Georgia 30314
Department of African-American / Africana Women's Studies**

Clark Atlanta University's Department of African-American/Africana Women's Studies, as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Arts in Humanities, has given the students enrolled in the department permission to conduct research on African American life and experiences.

Participants asked to participate in this research will receive a copy of the interview questionnaire at least one week before the interview. All participants will receive a consent form as well as phone call confirming the date, time, and/or place of a face to face interview or telephone interview. Please, note that the research interview will take about one hour.

Also, understand that this study is voluntary, and all information that you provide during the course of the interview will be kept confidential, and will not be released without the permission of the participant. Moreover, you may withdraw your consent at any time during the study. Your participation in this project should not produce any unforeseen stress, discomfort, health, or emotional risks.

During the audio taped interview, you will be asked to give your real name in order to ensure confidentiality. Audio tapes will be housed in the office of African-American Studies/Africana Women's Studies and transferred to Woodruff Library three months later. The contact person for Clark Atlanta University and this project is Dr. Karamo Barrow at (404) 880-8248, Dr. Josephine Bradley at (404) 880-6810, and Dr. Georgianna Bolden, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (404) 880-6979.

Participant:

I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects in Research, Clark Atlanta University, for research – related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights. Therefore, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Georgianna Bolden, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (404) 880-6979. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I, _____, agree / do not agree to participate in this research.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

Release Form

I, _____, hereby convey to Clark Atlanta University Woodruff Library and Latangela L. Coleman-Crossfield legal title and assign all literary property rights, including copyright, which I may have in an interview research with me on _____ (date), in _____ (city/state) as part of it's The Impact of Sexism on African-American Women Ministers in Selected Branches of Methodism as Perceived by Clergywomen: 1980-2000 project.

The audio recording will be housed in the Archives of Woodruff Library Collection, to be available for research, and to be administered in accordance with the Archives policies. The Archives shall also have the right to use, produce, exhibit, or publish their material. It is understood that this agreement covers original recordings and any transcript or other reproduction of the originals made by the Archives.

This agreement does not preclude any use I may want to make of the information in the recordings itself.

It is also agreed that a transcript will be deposited in the Clark Atlanta University Woodruff Library. The Archives shall retain copyright over this copy as well, and it may not be duplicated, published, or exhibited without permission of the Archives.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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